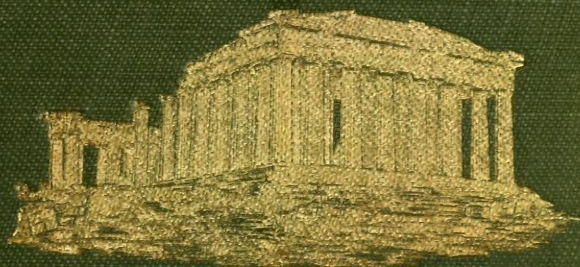


THE PLUTUS
OF ARISTOPHANES





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THE PLUTUS OF ARISTOPHANES



ASCLEPIOS

From a bust (fifth century B.C.) in the British Museum.

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THE PLUTUS OF ARISTOPHANES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES

BY THE RIGHT HON.

SIR WILLIAM RANN KENNEDY

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S LORDS JUSTICES OF APPEAL; HON. FELLOW OF
PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; HON. LL.D. OF THE VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY; FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER

INTRODUCTION

THE *Plutus* in its extant form was the latest in date of all the comedies of Aristophanes of which we possess a complete text. It is a remarkable play, although in some respects a less important and a less attractive work than most of its predecessors. The author has ceased to be the bold and brilliant critic of contemporary statesmen, poets, and philosophers, pleading by the mouth of his Chorus before the multitudes of his countrymen assembled in the theatre at the Great Dionysia or at the Lenæa the cause which he espouses, and in the comic action of his piece, with infinite humour, holding up the mirror to the faults and follies, as he deems them, of their political and social life and literary taste. The peculiar historical interest with which the earlier Aristophanic comedies are thus invested does not attach to this latest composition. The difference is not, I think, to be attributed to any failure of the poet's intellectual faculties. He was not an old man in 388 B.C., the date of the representation of the *Plutus*—probably not more than fifty-six years of age. Nor, in my judgment, does the play itself, viewed as a work of art, prove that time had blunted his wit or sterilised the creative power of his imagination. If, as is

indeed the case, the *Plutus* lacks some of the characteristic features of the plays written by Aristophanes and acted upon the stage between 426 and 405 B.C.; if the part of the Chorus has dwindled, if the personal and political allusions are few and trivial, and if the humorous irony of the piece, as compared with the exuberant drollery of such productions as the *Clouds*, the *Wasps*, and the *Birds*, is subdued in tone; sufficient cause is to be found in the great and melancholy change which had been wrought in Athens during the seventeen years which immediately preceded its appearance. The sun of her grandeur had set. The poet who wrote the *Plutus*, and many of his fellow-countrymen for whom he wrote it, had been themselves tossed and battered in the storm of political disaster which began with the failure of the Sicilian expedition and, after the fatal battle of Ægospotami, culminated in the capture of their city by Lysander, the demolition of the Long Walls, the subversion of her democratic constitution, and the establishment in its place of an unpatriotic oligarchy which installed a Lacedæmonian garrison in the Acropolis. It is true that, after the 'year of anarchy,' Athens, mainly owing to the gallantry, skill, and perseverance of Thrasybulus, regained her free institutions, and almost her independence. But, "in respect of power, Athens was but the shadow of her former self. She had no empire, no tribute, no fleet, no fortifications, no Peiræus, no Long Walls, not a single fortified place in Attica."¹ It was not until ten years afterwards (393 B.C.) that, with powerful aid from Persia, Conon, the Athenian admiral, after defeating the Spartans and

¹ Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. viii. p. 399.

their allies in the sea-fight off Cnidus, rebuilt the Long Walls between Athens and Peiræus, and fortified Peiræus itself, thereby restoring to his country both a naval station and dockyard and a safe harbour for sea-borne commerce.

The material prosperity and the political influence of Athens partially revived, no doubt, in the course of the five years which intervened between these events and the production of the *Plutus*. But imperial Athens—the Athens of enterprise and expansion, supreme upon Grecian seas—the creation of that high-spirited, intellectual, and sanely imaginative people, which in its little corner of the globe and in the short space of two generations evolved the idea of beauty, and enthroned it in immortal works of literature and art—that Athens had passed away. The Athens of 388 B.C. was still the centre of Greek culture; but her citizens no longer breathed the atmosphere of confident, exultant liberty, which had bred and nourished the Old Comedy. The era of political and literary giants had closed. Aristophanes, its child and its critic, could not fail to recognise the limitations which the alteration of environment imposed upon the energy of his genius. And so, in the *Plutus*, the poet produced a new sort of comic drama, with an ethical basis and an allegorical superstructure, almost devoid of personal and political satire, and representing the miraculous cure of the evil of the unjust distribution of human riches—the advent of an Attic Utopia, of which all good citizens might boast, in Gilbertian phrase:—

“So poverty is obsolete and hunger is abolished.”

This play, in fact, marks the beginning of the transition of the

Greek Comedy from the Old Comedy of Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes,

"Atque alii quorum Comædia prisca virorum est,"

through the Middle Comedy, of which little beyond a long list of authors has come down to us, to the New Comedy, the Comedy of Manners, which began to flourish in the second half of the fourth century B.C. With this Greek Comedy of Manners, "imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis," concerned only with ordinary persons and events of everyday life, we are to some extent acquainted through the Latin adaptations by Plautus and Terence of plot and text from Philemon, Diphilus, Menander, and Apollodorus. The *Menæchmi* of Plautus, from which Shakespeare directly or indirectly drew for his *Comedy of Errors*, was itself derived from one (it is uncertain which) of the writers of the New Comedy.

The *Plutus* of 388 B.C., which we have, is said to have been preceded by a comedy with the same title produced by Aristophanes in 408 B.C. If there existed any literary connection between these two plays it was slight. The historical references scattered throughout our *Plutus* are to personages and to circumstances of a much later date than 408 B.C. There are no references to political events either of that year or of the period which immediately preceded it. The *Frogs*, and, although less characteristically, the *Ecclesiazusæ*, both of which were written and produced after 408 B.C., belong to the Old Comedy, whereas in our *Plutus*, as I have already said, the salient features of the Old Comedy do

not exist. And, lastly, a just inference may be drawn from the subject-matter itself that our *Plutus* was a play written, or substantially re-written, at the later date. I should think that no playwright ever lived who was more sagacious than Aristophanes in the selection of topics which would arrest and hold the attention of his audience; and the Athenians would have felt little interest in the representation of a drama which turns upon the giving of wealth to the deserving poor, and the stripping of the unworthy rich, if the circumstances of the time had not made the question of 'ways and means' one of present and peculiar importance. Such circumstances of appositeness did not exist in 408 B.C., three years before the sea-fight of Ægospotami; in 388 B.C. they were painfully conspicuous. "We cannot doubt, indeed, that the prosecution of the war must have been a heavy financial burthen upon the Athenians from 395 B.C. downward to 387 B.C. How they made good the cost, without any contributory allies or any foreign support, except what Konon obtained during one year from Pharnabazus, we are not informed. On the revival of the democracy in 403 B.C. the poverty of the city, both public and private, had been very great, owing to the long previous war, ending with the loss of all Athenian property abroad. At a period about three years afterwards it seems that the Athenians were in arrears, not merely for the tribute-money which they then owed to Sparta as her subject allies, but also to the Boeotians on account of damage done; that they were too poor to perform in full the religious sacrifices prescribed for the year, and were obliged to omit some even of the more ancient; that the docks as well as the walls were in

sad want of repair. Even the pay to those citizens who attended the public assemblies and sat as *Dikasts* in the *dikasteries*—pay essential to the working of the democracy—was restored only by degrees, beginning first at one *obolus*, and not restored to three *oboli*, at which it had stood before the capture, until after an interval of some years. It was at this time, too, that the *Theoric Board*, or *Paymasters* for the general expenses of public worship and sacrifice, was first established; and when we read how much the Athenians were embarrassed for the means of celebrating the prescribed sacrifices, there was probably great necessity for the formation of some such office."¹ When *Blepsidemus* asks *Chremylus* (vv. 489-97) whether there is any shield or breastplate which poverty has not compelled the owner to pawn, he doubtless puts a question which many in the audience must have felt scarcely to exaggerate a bitter truth. The solemn installation of the God of Wealth in the Treasury on the Acropolis at the close of the play was designed by *Aristophanes* not merely as a dramatic incident, but to give to his countrymen a happy omen of prosperity after the long period of financial distress.²

A summary of the contents of the play will be found in the Argument which is prefixed to the text of this translation. The design of the play, and the execution of that design, appear to me to be not unworthy of the great comic poet. The social problem, which supplied its motive, remains as real and as interesting for every civilised community to-day as it was for the Athens

¹ Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. ix. p. 525.

² Cf. Cookesley's ed. of the *Plutus*, 1833, p. 115.

of Aristophanes. The play has suffered in esteem owing to the inevitable comparison of it with the marvellous creations of the same author in the earlier period of his life. We may apply to its position the remark of Henry Nelson Coleridge¹ upon the position of the Homeric Hymns: "It is with the Homeric Hymns as it is with many of the plays, and all the minor pieces, of Shakespeare: they are darkened by the excessive lustre of the sun-like poetry at their side, and are esteemed the less in proportion to the splendour of their imputed kindred." The gradual and reluctant surrender of Plutus to the artful pleading of Chremylus and Cario, the rhetorical duel between Chremylus and Poverty, and Cario's tale of the night of the healing of Plutus in the temple of Asclepios, exhibit, each in its own way, a happy blend of mordant wit with fertile fancy; and the critic must, I think, be either very exacting or very dull who does not appreciate the humour of the successive scenes which depict the revolution, in heaven as well as on earth, effected by the restoration of sight to the blind God of Wealth.

For reasons already given, in the eyes of the student of Athenian history the play is not comparable in value to the Aristophanic dramas of the earlier period. Still, even from the historical standpoint, the *Plutus* is an interesting and instructive work. It evidences incidentally the miserable condition of the free artisan in the Athenian community and the extensive use of skilled slave labour in manufactures; the privileged position of the confidential domestic servant in the Athenian household; the frequent success of the odious tribe of

¹ *Introductions to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets*, p. 339.

Informers (*συκοφάνται*), who amassed wealth by false accusations and kindred methods of extortion ; the misuse by politicians of State offices for private gain ; and such a frankly contemptuous handling of the national deities and their priesthood upon the comic stage, as might at first sight surprise the reader who remembers that only eleven years before Socrates had been condemned to death upon an indictment of which one of the gravest counts was that he despised the divinities worshipped by the State. In regard, however, to this last-named feature of our play, very large allowance must be made for the traditional licence of the Dionysiac festival ; and it would be quite wrong to infer from the sport which Aristophanes makes of Hermes, and even of Great Zeus himself, upon the boards of the theatre, that off the stage he would have countenanced either irreverent conduct or atheistic teaching. In this very play, in the serious lines (vv. 489-97) which Aristophanes puts into the mouth of Chremylus at the commencement of his disputation with Poverty, the wicked (*πονηροί*) and the godless (*ἄθεοι*) are classed together, and one of the happy results of the healing of the blindness of Plutus is there prophesied to be that all men will become "reverent toward things divine" (*τὰ θεῖα σέβοντες*).

A few words, in conclusion, in regard to the translation itself. In the preface to their admirable prose translation of the "Odyssey," the late Mr. S. H. Butcher and Mr. Andrew Lang quote a discouraging pronouncement of Mr. Matthew Arnold that "in a verse translation no original work is any longer recognisable." Whilst regretfully admitting that translation from verse to verse must in some degree transform, I venture to think that there have been

translations which ought to be exempted from this sweeping condemnation. The saying of Mr. Frederic Harrison¹ that "a complete translation of a great poem is of course an impossible thing" seems to be more just. At all events, a certain measure of success in reproducing the original ought to be less difficult of attainment, and the attempt to translate in verse, therefore, may be at least more excusable, in the case of a comedy than in the case either of an epic, in which so much of its glory depends upon splendour of diction and musical march of rhythm, or of a lyric poem, the characteristic charm of which is the apt embodiment of emotional ecstasy in the eloquence of melodious metrical sound. In this little book—the pleasant work, long ago begun, of leisure hours—I have tried to render the Greek text² as faithfully as possible in good modern English, and, in the rendering, to preserve the spirit and the savour of the Attic original. It is for others to judge how far the attempt has been successful. I can only dare to hope that some spark of the Aristophanic wit may be found to live amongst "the ashes of translation." I have not wittingly departed from the original by omission or substitution except in the case of passages—they are rare and unimportant—in which the Greek by reason of its grossness or indecency could not have been expressed in English without offence. Of course, where the pleasantry (as in vv. 453, 652, 1128-9)³ consisted in a mere play upon words, it can only be represented, as I have

¹ *The Choice of Books and other Literary Pieces*, p. 38.

² The text of Th. Bergk has generally been followed.

³ The references, here and above, are to the verses of the original.

endeavoured to represent it, by an equivalent. Subjoined to the text of the translation are brief explanatory notes. They will serve, I hope, to interpret such mythological, historical, and other allusions in the play as otherwise, perhaps, might not be intelligible to every modern reader.

W. R. K.

THE ARGUMENT

CHREMYLUS, an old Attic farmer, had lived honestly and piously, but had not prospered in his business. Seeing all around him the worldly welfare of evil-doers, he journeyed with his slave Cario to inquire of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi whether he ought to educate his only son, whom he dearly loved, in his own ways of honesty or in the popular ways of dishonesty. To this question the oracle returned the cryptic response that Chremylus should attach himself to the first person whom he met after leaving the temple, and should induce that person to accompany him home.

Now, the first person he met was a blind and ragged old man, who was in fact Plutus, the god of wealth ; and the comedy opens with the arrival of the three wayfarers before the house of Chremylus in the neighbourhood of Athens. Cario, ignorant as yet of the terms of the oracular response, and irritated by his master's apparently profitless procedure in following a blind man, persuades Chremylus to explain the reason, and, having heard it, joins Chremylus in forcing Plutus, who has hitherto obstinately refused to answer any question, to confess his identity. Plutus, in answer to further questions, explains that Zeus blinded him in his youth in order to prevent him from discerning the good from the bad, and so fulfilling his desire to give wealth only to those who deserved it. Chremylus begs Plutus to enter his house and promises to cure him of his blindness. For some time Plutus objects. He dreads, he says, the wrath of Zeus. However, at last, after much ingenious argument on the part of Chremylus and Cario, his fears are overcome, and he suffers himself to be persuaded to accept hospitality, whilst Cario is despatched to summon in haste from the country the farmers who are his master's friends and neighbours, in order that they

may share in the redistribution of wealth—the enriching of the good and the stripping of the wicked—which will result from the restoration of eyesight to the blind god of wealth. In Act II. Cario returns, bringing with him the twenty-four old farmers who form the Chorus in the play. After shrewdly teasing them, Cario reveals the object of his master's invitation. In their delight they break into dance and song, led by Cario, who, when dance and song are finished, retires into the house for refreshment and rest. In the next Scene, Chremylus comes forward to welcome the Chorus, and to ask for the aid which they gladly undertake to give him. They have scarcely given their promise, when Blepsidemus, an Athenian friend of Chremylus, arrives in haste from the city, where he has already heard the rumour that Chremylus has suddenly become rich. He is incredulous and inquisitive; and, when Chremylus admits that there is some foundation for the gossip, he intimates his strong suspicion that the change of circumstances is the fruit of some dishonesty, and for a long time he remains deaf to Chremylus's reiterated protestations of innocence. Convinced at last by his friend's asseveration that Plutus is actually a guest in his house, Blepsidemus eagerly enters into the project of taking Plutus to be healed of his blindness in the temple of Asclepios (Æsculapius); and Chremylus is on the point of going to prosecute the scheme, when the pair are suddenly confronted by the awful apparition of Poverty—a pale and furious female—who compels them to stand and listen whilst she fiercely upbraids them for their conspiracy to restore vision to the god of wealth and, as a consequence, inasmuch as all men will become good in order to become wealthy, to banish her from the land. Chremylus retorts that no greater benefit than this could be conferred upon mankind, and, at her instance, it is agreed between the disputants that the case of Poverty *versus* Wealth shall be forthwith argued out, the conquered to be at the mercy of the conqueror. A brilliant duel of words ensues; Poverty contending, with much rhetorical skill, that it is upon her that moral virtue and social happiness alike depend; and Chremylus, on his part, descanting upon the misery of the poor, and upon the stimulus which will be given to virtue when Plutus regains the power of discernment and gives wealth only to honest folk. In the end, overcome rather by the browbeating and oburgation of her adversary than by his logic, Poverty is driven from the

field, and the two conspirators, congratulating themselves on their victory, and resolving to lose no time about the cure of Plutus in the temple of Asclepius, summon Cario to convey Plutus with the needful bedgear to the holy place.

A night is supposed to have elapsed before the next Act begins. In the first Scene Cario returns from the temple and gleefully announces to the Chorus the triumph of the great experiment. Their loud expression of joy brings out of the house the wife of Chremylus, who has been anxiously expecting news; and, when she comes upon the stage, Cario tells her and the Chorus the wonderful tale of the preceding night. The lady, full of gratitude, then re-enters her house in order to prepare a fitting reception for Plutus and her husband, whose speedy return, Cario says, may be expected. Plutus arrives first and offers a gracious salutation to Helios—the god of light—to the land of Cecrops, and to the domain of the great goddess Athene; and he is immediately followed by Chremylus, attended by a troop of friends who rather bore the old farmer with their officious attention. Plutus and her husband are welcomed at the threshold by the wife of Chremylus, and enter the house where a grand feast is being prepared in honour of the god.

In the Scenes which follow, after an interval during which there is a dance of the Chorus in the orchestra, the audience is shown the results which quickly flow, in heaven as well as on earth, from the new distribution of the favours of Plutus. In the first Cario describes to the Chorus the glorious transformation which has suddenly come to pass in his master's house. Wine, oil, flour, and spices abound; gold and silver and ivory utensils have taken the place of the old and dirty household ware. The servants are playing games of chance with golden pieces, and the master himself is engaged in costly sacrifices. At the close of this narrative, a Just Man, attended by a youthful slave, appears upon the stage. He had been reduced to poverty by his generosity to ungrateful friends, but Plutus has now restored his fortune, and he desires to express his gratitude to the god by offering up his threadbare cloak and old shoes as votive gifts. Almost on his heels, an Informer, who brings a witness with him, rushes in, furiously denouncing Plutus as the author of his undoing. He had grown rich by his malpractices,

and now all his ill-gotten wealth has vanished. Mocked by his auditors, he roundly charges them with robbing him, threatens them with prosecution, and justifies his profession. He is invited to mend his ways, but he scornfully rejects the suggestion, and is thereupon forcibly compelled to exchange his fine cloak and shoes for the old cloak and shoes of the Just Man, and, finally, is obliged to depart, wearing the old cloak and with the old shoes fastened to his forehead, whilst Cario conducts the Just Man into the house of Chremylus. In the next Scene an Old Woman enters, and is going to knock at the door when Chremylus comes out and asks her errand. She, like the Informer, is full of complaints against Plutus. Her youthful lover, so nice and attentive whilst she was rich and he was poor and benefited by her liberality, has deserted her, now that he has himself been enriched by Plutus. Whilst she is descanting to Chremylus on this injustice, the Young Man appears carrying garlands, and apparently bound for some revel. A dialogue between the three, which is amusing, though perhaps somewhat rougher than modern taste would warrant, follows. Ultimately, the Young Man, still reluctant to resume affectionate relations with the Old Woman, enters the house of Chremylus in order to thank Plutus and to dedicate to him the garlands he has brought, and the Old Woman escorted by Chremylus follows closely after him.

Act V. brings the god Hermes on the stage. He knocks at the door of the house and Cario appears. Hermes begins by threatening, as the messenger of Zeus, the whole household of Chremylus with instant annihilation for the crime of restoring sight to Plutus. Now, when good men have become rich, there are no more sacrifices offered, and all the gods are starving. But he pleads chiefly for himself. Will not Cario admit him as a fellow servant? No job, he declares, will come amiss to him. After much lively banter Cario yields, and Hermes adds one more to his many mythological attributes as "Hermes the Scullion." Thus concludes not the least humorous part of the comedy.

The next and final Scene commences with the entrance of a Priest of Zeus the Saviour. Like Hermes, and for the same cause, he has been reduced to a state of starvation, upon which he dolefully dilates to Chremylus, who has come out of the house to prepare the installation of

Plutus in the Treasury of Athene on the Acropolis. The Priest declares his determination to desert the service of Zeus, and to dwell in the house of Chremylus instead. Chremylus comforts him by the astounding intelligence that the great Zeus himself has, of his own accord, descended from Heaven and become his guest. If the Priest will only wait a little, all shall be well. Chremylus then directs Plutus to be summoned, and the Priest willingly accepts his instructions to take lighted torches and lead the way to the Acropolis. Plutus, followed by the Old Woman, the Young Man, Cario, and the rest of the household of Chremylus, thereupon come out of the house ; the Old Woman, after being promised a reconciliation with her lover that same day, consents to carry upon her head the earthen vessels required for the ceremony of installation ; a solemn procession is formed ; and the actors, as they leave the stage, are immediately followed by the Chorus chanting anthems in honour of the god of wealth.

Throughout the play the scene represents the house of Chremylus.



ATHENE PARTHENOS.
From a Statue in the British Museum.

PERSONS REPRESENTED

CARIO—*Slave of Chremylus.*

CHREMYLUS—*An Attic farmer.*

PLUTUS—*God of Wealth*

Chorus of Attic farmers.

BLEPSIDEMUS—*A friend of Chremylus*

POVERTY.

WIFE OF CHREMYLUS.

A JUST MAN.

AN INFORMER.

AN OLD WOMAN.

A YOUNG MAN.

HERMES.

A PRIEST OF ZEUS.



THE PLUTUS OF ARISTOPHANES

ACT I.

SCENE I.

(The road from Delphi: in the foreground the farmhouse of CHREMYLUS, in the neighbourhood of Athens. Enter from the L. PLUTUS, represented as an old man, blind and unkempt, feeling his way with a staff, and closely followed by CHREMYLUS and CARIO, each of whom wears a wreath of laurel.)

CHREMYLUS, CARIO, PLUTUS.

CARIO. *(Soliloquising aloud)*

Oh! it is weary work, ye Powers of Heaven,
To be the bondsman of a crazy lord.
For if the slave gives the most wise advice,
But his possessor will not act on it,
The slave must share the evil consequence.
The rule of his own body is not his,
Since fate assigned it to his purchaser.
Well, well, so much for that. But Loxias,¹
Who from the gold-wrought tripod² prophesies,
Him I do blame, and justly, for that he,
Reputed sage physician and sage seer,
Has sent my lord away with mind distraught.

¹ A title of Apollo, as the oracular interpreter of Zeus.

² The peculiarly shaped seat with three supports, upon which the priestess of Apollo at Delphi sat when she delivered the oracle. An illustration taken from Müller's *Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst* will be found in Rich's *Companion to the Latin and Greek Lexicon* (1849), p. 690. The whole line is evidently borrowed from some tragedy.

From place to place he follows a blind man,
 And therein does just what he should not do,
 For it is we who see that lead the blind,
 But he tramps on with blindness for his guide,
 And I, on his compulsion; aye, although
 The fellow, when we speak to him, vouchsafes
 Not even a grunt in answer. (To CHREMYLUS) Master mine,
 I can't keep silence longer, and, unless
 You tell me why we're following this man,
 I'm going to give trouble.

(CHREMYLUS *threatens him with his staff*)

Ah! I know

You will not beat me while I wear my wreath.¹

CHREM. Indeed I shall not, while you wear the wreath;
 But I'll soon strip your brows and beat you then
 So that you'll have worse suffering.²

CARIO.

Idle words!

I shall persist until you have explained

Who in the world (*pointing to PLUTUS*) this is; you might as well;
 'Tis my devotion makes me curious.

CHREM. Well, I'll reveal: for you, of all my slaves,
 I rank the first in loyalty and—theft.

¹ Those who visited the Delphic shrine, in order to consult the oracle, wore, both on their outward and on their homeward journey, laurel wreaths, which conferred upon the wearers a sacrosanct character. In Sophocles, *Edipus Rex* (v. 83), Creon is represented, when he comes from his visit to Delphi, as wearing a laurel wreath; and from the same passage it would seem that, if the emissary returned from the oracle with evil tidings, he took off his wreath before delivering his message. Wunder, in his note upon it, quotes from Livy xxiii. c. 11 a passage in which Fabius Pictor, upon his return from a mission to Delphi, tells the Roman Senate that the priestess had commanded him to continue wearing the wreath until his return to Rome.

² Because his head would have become unprotected.

I'd lived an honest and god-fearing life,
But I fared badly, and was poor.

CARIO. I know.

CHREM. Others were rich; informers,¹ shrine-robbers,
Rhetoricians, cheats.

CARIO. I am quite sure of that.

CHREM. Therefore I went to ask the god's advice,
Feeling, as to my own poor wretched self,
My quiverful of years was nearly spent,
But, as to him, who is my only son,
Craving to learn whether he ought to change,
And be unscrupulous, unjust, corrupt:
That seemed the winning policy in life.

CARIO. And what spake Phœbus from his laurel wreaths?²

CHREM. I'll tell you. Very plain the oracle:
Whom I should first, after I left the shrine,
Encounter, him it bade me cleave unto,
And coax him to accompany me home.

CARIO. And whom did you encounter first?

CHREM. (*Pointing to PLUTUS*) This man.

CARIO. Do you not grasp the meaning of the god?
He bids you, dullard, unmistakably,
Train up your son as fashion here prescribes.

CHREM. Your argument?

CARIO. Why, surely, e'en the blind

¹ Whatever be the origin of the word *συκοφάντης*, it served in the time of Aristophanes to denote a class of people who made a living by instituting, or threatening to institute, prosecutions in order to extort money. See below, pp. 46-49. It is generally supposed that the word had its source in a law forbidding the exportation of figs from Attica, which led to vexatious informations.

² The priestess at Delphi, where she delivered the oracle, wore a laurel wreath, and sat on a tripod which was ornamented with laurel.

See the god's judgment, that, in this our day,
Training in sin is training to success.

CHREM. That cannot be the drift of the response :
It points to something grander ; if our friend
Would tell us who he is, and to what end,
And on what quest he journeyed here with us,
Then we might learn what means the oracle.

CARIO. (*Turning to PLUTUS*)

Hark you, my man ; will you disclose your name,
Or must we take strong measures ? Quick's the word.

PLUTUS. Go, hang, I tell you.

CARIO. Did you catch his name ?

CHREM. It was to you and not to me he spoke ;
You ask so roughly and uncivilly.

(*To PLUTUS*)

Sir, an you love the paths of uprightness,
Tell me your name.

PLUTUS. My curse upon you, too !

CARIO. (*To CHREMYLUS*)

Make much of him and the god's augury !

(*CHREMYLUS and CARIO seize PLUTUS*)

CHREM. Oh, by Demeter,¹ you shall smart, and soon !

CARIO. Yea, speak, or I will slay thee horribly !

PLUTUS. Fellows, unhand me, both of you !

CHREM. We won't.

CARIO. O Master mine, my counsel is the best.

I'll give this creature a most dreadful death ;

¹ Chremylus, as an Attic farmer, swears with peculiar propriety by the goddess of the harvest. See, for the same oath, pp. 21 and 30 below.

I'll take him to a precipice, then run
And leave him to fall down and break his neck.

CHREM. Up with him then at once.

PLUTUS. Mercy!

CHREM. Your name?

PLUTUS. I'm sure, if once you get discovery,
You'll do me harm and never let me go.

CHREM. I swear we will release you, if you wish.

PLUTUS. Well, then, release me first.

(CHREMYLUS and CARIO take their hands off him)

CHREM. There, you are free.

PLUTUS. Attend then; since I must, as I suppose,
Reveal the secret I had set myself
To keep, I'm Plutus.

CARIO. Basest of the base,
You Plutus, and not tell me!

CHREM. You, the god
Of wealth, in such a most unwholesome plight!
Phœbus Apollo, gods and demigods,
Great Zeus! What sayest thou? Art really he?

PLUTUS. Really.

CHREM. His very self?

PLUTUS. His veriest self.

CHREM. Tell me, where have you been to get so foul?

PLUTUS. I have just left the house of Patrocles,¹
The man who never bathed since he was born.

CHREM. (*Touching the eyes of PLUTUS*)
How came you by this trouble? Tell the tale.

¹ A contemporary tragic poet, whose habits appear to have been notoriously uncleanly.

PLUTUS. Zeus smote me thus, through spite against mankind.

I threatened once, when I was quite a lad,

Only to haunt the dwellings of the just

And wise and temperate; Zeus blinded me

To take away my power to discern:

So tyrannous the hate he bears the good.

CHREM. And yet 'tis to the good and just alone

He owes his honours.

PLUTUS. There, sir, I agree.

CHREM. Well now, conceive yourself with sight restored;

Would you thenceforward flee from knaves?

PLUTUS. I would.

CHREM. Frequent the mansions of the just?

PLUTUS. Of course.

Not for an age have I seen any such.

CHREM. No marvel that; I haven't, and I can see.

PLUTUS. Now leave me; you know all I have to tell.

CHREM. Never. Now all the more we'll stick to you.

PLUTUS. Did I not say that you would surely bring

Trouble upon me?

CHREM. Be less obstinate,

I do entreat you. Don't abandon me;

Though long you search, I swear you'll never find

A more deserving person. I'm unique.

PLUTUS. All men talk so. But when they once become

Possessed of me in fact, and wealth is theirs,

They simply pass all bounds in wickedness.

CHREM. There's truth in that; still every man's not bad.

PLUTUS. Yes, every single man.

CARIO. O you shall smart

Hours for this!

CHREM. That you may comprehend
The blessedness that is in store for you
If you abide with us, attend and learn:
"I ween, I ween, and heaven will approve,"¹
That I shall purge your eyes of their disease
And bring back vision.

PLUTUS. Oh, forbear, forbear;
I'd rather not have vision.

CHREM. Rather not?

CARIO. Sure Nature shaped this thing for misery.

PLUTUS (*aside*). I know that, if Zeus heard their silly speech,
He would afflict me.

CHREM. He afflicts you now,
Letting you roam around with stumbling steps.

PLUTUS. Perhaps: but oh! Zeus makes me quake with fear.

CHREM. Really! O cowardliest of deities,
Rate you the whole autocracy of Zeus
And all his thunderbolts as worth a doit
If you your sight, even for a spell, regained?

PLUTUS. Hush! Don't talk so, blasphemer!

CHREM. Hold your peace;
I'll demonstrate you're mightier far than Zeus.

PLUTUS. Mightier than Zeus?

CHREM. Yes, mightier, I swear.
For instance, what gives Zeus the rule of Heaven?

CARIO. Treasure, for he has most.

CHREM. Well, who supplies
Zeus with the treasure?

¹ A mock-tragic line, if not an actual quotation.

CARIO. Our friend here.

CHREM. And who

Causes mankind to offer sacrifice?

Plutus, again.

CARIO. Aye, and without disguise

Man's universal prayer is, "Give us wealth."

CHREM. Therefore, as Plutus is the cause, so he

Could, at his will, end all this easily.

PLUTUS. And why?

CHREM. Because no mortal any more,

Unless you wished, could on the altar put

Bullock or ground-wheat cake, or aught beside.

PLUTUS. How so?

CHREM. How so? Because a man can't buy

The wherewithal, unless you're there yourself,

And you provide him with the needful coin;

So, if Zeus plague you, by your might alone

The monarchy of Zeus shall be o'erthrown.

PLUTUS. Am I to understand it is through me

Men sacrifice to Zeus?

CHREM. And more than this.

Whatever brightness, beauty, or delight

The world enjoys, you are its origin:

Throughout creation wealth is lord of all.

CARIO. A paltry sum in cash made me a slave,

Because I was less rich than others were.

CHREM. The sportive girls of Corinth,¹ so they say,

If poor men seek their favour to obtain,

¹ Corinth then, as in much later times, was notorious for profligacy. See, for a representation of Corinthian manners, Becker's *Charicles*, pp. 22, *sqq.*

Turn a deaf ear ; but, if the suitor's rich,
Confess themselves at once in melting mood.

CARIO. Venality, though it may wear a mask,
Plays a great part in many love affairs.

CHREM. There is not one device or art on earth
Which has not been invented for your sake.
Through you the cobbler toils upon his bench.

CARIO. One works in bronze and one at joinery.

CHREM. One is a goldsmith—you provide the gold.

CARIO. One is a clothes-thief, one a housebreaker.

CHREM. One is a fuller.

CARIO. One a fleece-washer.

CHREM. One tans.

CARIO. Another is a greengrocer.

CHREM. 'Tis you who save the proved adulterer.¹

PLUTUS. Alack, alack, to think that I have lived
So long a time and never knew of this !

CARIO. Comes not from him the pomp of Persia's King ?
Is it not he who makes the Assembly² meet ?

CHREM. Do not you man our triremes ? Answer that.

CARIO. Is it not he who now our foreign force³
Victuals in Corinth ? Is not he the cause

Why Pamphilus⁴ shall one day come to grief ?

CHREM. Aye, and with him the " Needle-Seller "⁵ too.

¹ *I.e.*, by his payment of compensation to the injured husband in order to escape corporal punishment.

² Attendance at the Assembly (*ἐκκλησία*) entitled the citizen to a payment of money.

³ The Athenians, for the purpose of hostilities against Sparta, from 393 B.C. onwards, maintained in Corinth a body of mercenaries under Iphicrates. Cf. Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. ix. pp. 455-67.

⁴ A demagogue convicted of peculation.

⁵ A nickname of some associate of Pamphilus, who appears from this passage to have suffered, or, at all events, deserved, the like fate.

CARIO. Who but he gives Agyrrhius¹ such airs?

CHREM. Does not for thee Philepsius² tell tales?

Was it not for thy sake that Athens made
Alliance with the Egyptians,³ and through thee
That Lais⁴ favours her Philonides?

CARIO. The castle of Timotheus⁵

CHREM.

Fall on you!

(Turns to PLUTUS)

Is it not plain now, Plutus, that in thee
Centres the whole machinery of life!
Rest well assured that thou, and only thou
Art cause of all, both good and ill alike.

CARIO. In war, at any rate, those always win
Upon whose helmets perches⁶ this god alone.

¹ A swaggering citizen, ridiculed also in the *Lysistrata*.

² Apparently a poor Athenian, who tried to earn a living as a story-teller. Cookesley identifies him with a person of the same name mentioned by Demosthenes.

³ To what alliance Aristophanes refers is unknown.

⁴ A notorious courtesan, Sicilian by birth, who resided at Corinth. Her favoured lover at this time appears to have been Philonides, a rich Athenian, who is ridiculed for this amour here and in the choric song of Cario, below, p. 18.

⁵ Son of Conon, the famous Athenian admiral, who won the sea fight of Cnidus and rebuilt the Long Walls. (Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. ix. p. 447.)

It seems from this passage that Timotheus, who was then a young man, had built himself a house, the great height of which was such as to excite public ridicule.

⁶ The general meaning of this passage is clear: those win who have the 'sinews of war.' Different views, however, have been held as to the metaphor by which this meaning is conveyed. That which I have adopted is, I think, grammatically preferable, and the metaphor is to some extent illustrated by v. 574 of the *Birds*, in which Victory is spoken of as flying with wings of gold. Cf. for the metaphor, "Victory sits on our helmets" (Shakespeare, *King Richard III.*, Act V., Sc. 3). The Greek helmet sometimes carried below the crest a bright ornament (*phálos*) formed by some figure in relief. A specimen of a double *phálos*, consisting of two griffins, is represented in Rich's *Companion to the Latin and Greek Lexicon*, p. 313. See, also, the description given by Mr. A. H. Smith, in his *Sculpture in*

PLUTUS. Can I, quite by myself, work all these wonders?

CHREM. And many more than these; I pledge my oath,
 Of you none ever had a surfeit yet;
 Of all things else we feel satiety.
 Of love.

CARIO. Of loaves.

CHREM. Of music.

CARIO. And of sweets.

CHREM. Of honour.

CARIO. Tarts.

CHREM. Of nobleness.

CARIO. And figs.

CHREM. Ambition.

CARIO. Cakes.

CHREM. Generalships.

CARIO. Lentil soup.

CHREM. No one of you has ever had his fill;
 If one acquires talents¹ three and ten,
 He hankers all the more for six and ten;
 These got, he must have talents four times ten,
 Or vows that life is not worth living else.

PLUTUS. You two, I think, reason most cogently,
 But I've just one fear left me.

CHREM. Fear of what?

the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum (1892-1900), vol. i. pp. 96, 97, of the helmet of the colossal statue of Athene Parthenos by Pheidias. Another interpretation of the passage is that those are victorious into whose scale Plutus throws his single weight. I doubt whether the Greek admits grammatically of such a rendering, and in Homer, *Il.* viii. vv. 69-72, and xxii. vv. 209-12, where Zeus is described as weighing the fates of contending warriors, it is the losing and not the winning side whose scale sinks downward.

¹ The Attic talent at this time represented a weight in silver equal to about 57·75 lbs., and a value of about £200.

PLUTUS. As to the means whereby I may obtain

Use of the power which you say is mine.

CHREM. Great heaven! You prove the common adage true,

"Wealth's a most nervous creature."¹

PLUTUS. I protest;

A burglar's slander. Once upon a time

He broke and entered, but could get no swag,

Finding the plate safe under lock and key,

And so he called my prudence "nervousness."

CHREM. Well, cast away all care; if you but prove

A man of mettle for the work in hand,

I'll give you sharper sight than Lynceus² had.

PLUTUS. How can you, a mere mortal, compass this?

CHREM. I am inspired with hope by words which spake

"Phœbus himself when Delphic laurels shook."³

PLUTUS. The god is privy, then, to this affair?

CHREM. He is.

PLUTUS. Beware!

CHREM. Don't worry, my good friend;

Even at the cost of life, be well assured,

I will myself achieve this enterprise.

CARIO. So, by your leave, will I.

CHREM. And we shall find

Allies in plenty—all of those to whom

An honest life has made a starving home.

PLUTUS. My word, there's not much strength in your allies!

¹ This is a parody of a verse in the *Phanissæ* of Euripides (v. 597).

² One of the Argonauts, endowed, according to the legend, with preternatural power of vision.

³ The trembling of the laurel denoted the presence of the deity. The line is evidently borrowed from some tragedy.

CHREM. There will be, if they've got wealth back again,
And a new start. Cario, speed away.

CARIO. Upon what errand, please?

CHREM. Summon you all
My brother-farmers, whom you'll find, I guess,
Toiling afield, that we may share alike,
And each enjoy a slice of Plutus here.

CARIO. I fly, I fly.

(Then pointing to a parcel)

Let someone from the house
Take this tit-bit of meat¹ indoors for me.
CHREM. I will look after that; run off at once.

(CARIO leaves the stage)

(Turning to PLUTUS)

But thou, O Plutus, mightiest deity,
Shalt enter here with me; behold the house
Which thou this day by fair means—or by foul—
Must fill with treasure to the bursting-point.

PLUTUS. To cross a stranger's threshold, I protest,
To me is most distasteful; never yet
Have I drawn pleasure from such harbourage.
If I, perchance, become a miser's guest,
He straightway buries me beneath the ground,
And when a friend, a worthy wight, appears,
To beg the favour of some trifling sum,
He swears he never saw me in his life.
And, if I sojourn with a scatter-brain,

¹ A remnant from the sacrifice offered by Chremylus to Apollo at Delphi.

I'm thrown to feed debauchery and dice,
Thrust, in a twinkling, naked out of doors.

CHREM. You've never yet lit on the golden mean ;
But I've been always something of that sort :
For I delight in saving—no man more—
And, at the proper time, in spending too.
But let us now go in ; for I desire
To introduce you to my wife, and son,
My only son, who is so dear to me ;
You, you alone, are dearer.

PLUTUS. I believe it.

CHREM. Why should one speak aught but the truth to you ?

(CHREMYLUS and PLUTUS enter the house of CHREMYLUS)

(*End of Act I.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter from L. CARIO, and, following him, the CHORUS of twenty-four old Attic farmers, who pass into the Orchestra, and there range themselves on the platform, in the centre of which stands the Thymele, or altar of Dionysus. CARIO stands above them on the stage.

CARIO. O ye who with my master oft on thyme¹ have made
your meal,

His friends and fellow-wardsmen, for labour full of zeal,
Come, hasten, hurry. This is not a time for hesitation,
It is a crisis which demands our prompt co-operation.

CHORUS. Have you not seen that all the while we've done our
best to hustle,

If you consider weight of years and feebleness of muscle?
You think perhaps we ought to run without an explanation,
Wherefore your master sent to us through you this invitation.

CARIO. I've long been trying to explain; it's you who will not hear;
My master says you all shall live in plenty and good cheer,
Freed from the life that is so cold and comfortless for ever.

CHORUS. What is the nature, what the source, of this device so
clever?

¹ The wild thyme (*thymus vulgaris*) was used as food by the ancients, and especially by the poorer classes. They ate it with honey and vinegar, and they also mixed it with salt (see the *Acharnians* 1099).

CARIO. He has come home, and with him brought, ye workers of iniquity,¹

A poor, foul, wrinkled, toothless, bald, and bent piece of antiquity.

CHORUS. Oh, charming words! You mean that he's brought home a pile of gold?

CARIO. I rather mean he's brought a pile of ills to plague the old.

CHORUS. (*Menacing CARIO with their staves*)

Do you suppose that, having thus befooled us to your liking,
You shall escape unscathed, although our hands are armed for striking?

CARIO. Do you suppose me wholly and inherently so vile,

That not a word can pass my lips without the taint of guile?

CHORUS. How dignified the varlet is! (*To CARIO*) Sirrah, your ankles shout

A loud wail for the stocks and chains they've been too long without.

CARIO. Your names are on the panel of the Undertaker's Court,²

Charon has tickets ready—why not there at once resort?

CHORUS. A plague on you, born rip and rogue, alert to cozen thus

And meanly veil your master's aim in here convening us,

Who toil, with little leisure, yet have sped with eager haste

Through many fields of thyme-root, never halting for a taste.

¹ There is in the Greek a play upon the word *πονηρός* which may mean 'evil' or 'hard-working.'

² The Athenian juryman (*δικάστης*) was allotted to a particular Court by ballot, and received the ticket with the name of that Court, denoted by a letter of the alphabet, from the proper officer. Two other references to this procedure occur: see p. 52, n. (1) and p. 63. Cario twits the Chorus with their age. They are due, he says, to death, and Charon, the ferryman of Hades, is waiting to give them a place. There is an untranslatable play upon the Greek words *χάρων* and *ἄρχων* (the allotting officer). For an elaborate dissertation upon the method of choosing the juries at Athens, see Theodore Teusch, *De Sortitione Judicium apud Athenienses*, Göttingen, 1894.

CARIO. My master has come home, I now will give the information,
With Plutus, who to plutocrats shall work your transformation.

CHORUS. You really mean that all of us can riches now rely on?

CARIO. Nay more, you shall be Midases¹ if asses' ears you'll tie on.

CHORUS. I feel so gay, I feel so blithe, that I would like for pleasure,
If what you say is solemn truth, with you to tread a measure.

(*Dance, CARIO leading*)

CARIO. And gladly I will lead you, with the Cyclops² for my rôle ;
I'll play his tra-la-la³ and thus (*cuts a caper*) with both feet
caracole :

Come, children,⁴ in loud greeting,
The music of sheep bleating
And rank goats oft repeating,
Follow, follow, where I lead,
And ye, rams, shall early feed.

CHORUS. And we on our part bleating
And tra-la-la repeating,
Shall seek, when forth you lead your sheep,
To catch you sunk in sudden sleep,

¹ A reference to the well-known fable of Midas, King of Phrygia, whose touch converted to gold.

² The references in the stanzas which follow are to Homeric incidents. Cario begins by undertaking the part of Cyclops, the Polyphemus of the *Odyssey* (Bk. IX.) who, after devouring some of the companions of Odysseus, was blinded with a pointed brand whilst lying drunk and asleep amongst his flock, in the cave in which he dwelt. The Cyclops dance was a rustic dance in which the performer of the part of Cyclops moved in a rude, ungainly manner. (See Horace, *Sat.* I. 5. 53 ; *Ep.* II. 2. 125.)

³ The Greek word *θρεττανελό* was coined by Philoxenus in a satirical poem entitled "The Loves of the Cyclops" to signify phonetically the clumsy efforts of the Cyclops to play on the lyre, whilst trying to please the nymph Galatea.

⁴ The members of the Chorus, addressed as sheep and goats and invited to follow in the dance the movements of Cario as their shepherd, probably were clad in sheepskins and goatskins.

With your wallet by you set,
And your wild herbs gathered wet,
Foul and faint from a debauch:
Then, if lying thus we find you,
We shall do our best to blind you
With a big and pointed torch.

CARIO. I will mimic Circe¹ too,
Mimic her in every way,
Who once mixed the magic brew,
And at Corinth led astray
All Philonides's² band,
So that, deeming they were swine,
Dung they ate at her command,
Kneaded by her fingers fine;
Little pigs, be
Careful that ye
Follow your mother,³ grunting for glee.

CHORUS. Since you are Circe, who
Once mixed the magic brew,
And those Odysseus ruled
Polluted and befooled;
Like him we'll apprehend you,
Like him, in glee, suspend you,
And, as a goat's, your snout with dirt besmear;
Then "your mother follow,

¹ The beautiful sorceress, daughter of Helios, who detained Odysseus for a year in the Island of *Æaea* after changing some of his companions into swine. (*Od.* X. 135.)

² See above, p. 10, n. (4). Philonides is comically substituted for Odysseus, as Corinth, the home of his mistress *Lais*, is for *Æaea*.

³ *I.e.* Cario. The phrase was probably, as Cookesley (quoting Erasmus) has suggested, a proverb denoting stupidity following stupidity.

Little pigs," you'll holloa
With a slightly gaping Aristyllus¹ leer.

CARIO. Come now, cease these drolleries,
And assume another guise;
I, behind my master's back,
Mean to go and steal a snack,
Bread and meat, and, from the feed,
To my work I shall proceed.

CARIO *enters the house of* CHREMYLUS.

(*Dance of* CHORUS)

ACT II.

SCENE 2.

Enter CHREMYLUS *from the house.*

CHREM. (*To the* CHORUS.) To wish good day, O fellow-wards-
men mine,

Is now a musty phrase, quite out of date,
So I embrace you, for you've marched in haste
With steady effort and unflagging foot;
Shoulder to shoulder stand ye now with me,
Through to the end, true saviours of the god.

CHORUS. Be not afraid; you'll see us wear the front
Of Ares' self. It would be strange indeed,
If we, who for three obols² fight our way

¹ Treated as an objectionable person here and in the *Ecclesiastus* v. 646. Dr. Donaldson has suggested that it is Plato who is ridiculed under the name of Aristyllus, as a diminutive of Aristocles, which was the original name of the Greek philosopher. (*Theatre of the Greeks*, p. 191.)

² The pay of the citizen who sat in the Ecclesia = about $4\frac{3}{4}$ d. of our money.

In the Assembly's turmoil, should release
The god of wealth, to be another's prize.

(Enter from R. BLEPSIDEMUS)

CHREM. Hah, here comes Blepsidemus on the scene.

His hurried gait most plainly demonstrates
He has received some hint of our affair.

BLEPS. *(Soliloquising aloud)*

What is the fact, I wonder? How and whence
Comes sudden wealth to Chremylus? I doubt.
And yet, by Heracles, 'twas common talk
Amongst the idlers in the barbers' shops,
That Chremylus had all at once grown rich.
Again, there's this—to me a mystery—
He sends for friends to share his piece of luck :
That's surely not the common practice here.

CHREM. My Blepsidemus, I'll enlighten you.

For me to-day has bettered yesterday,
And you, a friend, may in my fortune share.

BLEPS. Are you indeed made rich, as people say?

CHREM. Rather, I shall be presently, please Heaven ;
There's in the venture just a shade of risk.

BLEPS. What sort of risk?

CHREM. It's this—

BLEPS. Out with it, man!

CHREM. If our cruise prospers, we are rich for life,
But, if we're wrecked, the ruin is complete.

BLEPS. The cargo you have shipped seems dangerous,
I like it not ; so swiftly to acquire
Excessive wealth, and then to quake with fear,
Suggests the perpetration of some wrong.

CHREM. How? Wrong?

BLEPS. If you have robbed the god, whose
shrine

You have just left, of silver or of gold,
And then, perchance, repented of the crime.

CHREM. Guardian Apollo! I am innocent.

BLEPS. Cease trifling, my good man; I understand.

CHREM. Do not suspect me of such villainy.

BLEPS. Alas! there's rottenness in every soul;
The lust of gain makes sinners of us all.

CHREM. Demeter be my witness, I declare

I think there's something rotten in your brain.

BLEPS. How sadly he is changed from his old self!

CHREM. Man, by the heaven above us, you're insane.

BLEPS. He cannot even keep a steady eye;
The sure sign this of consciousness of guilt.

CHREM. I understand your croaking; you conceive
That I have stolen something, and you want
To share with me.

BLEPS. I want to share? In what?

CHREM. But there's no theft; nor anything like theft.

BLEPS. A robbery, p'r'aps, with violence?

CHREM. You're daft.

BLEPS. Have you obtained some money, then, by fraud?

CHREM. You're wrong again.

BLEPS. O Heracles, what next
Is one to try? He will not tell the truth.

CHREM. The fault is yours, not mine; for you run on
Accusing me, before you know the facts.

BLEPS. Good friend, before it's public property,

I will quite cheaply hush your trouble up,
Sealing the pleaders' lips with petty bribes.

CHREM. Oh yes, I warrant, as a friend, you'll pay
Three minas,¹ and charge twelve in the account.

BLEPS. Methinks I see a certain man I know,
Seated in Court on the defendant's bench,
Holding a suppliant's branch, whilst round him stand
His wife and little ones, exactly like
The Heracleids² as limned by Pamphilus.

CHREM. That shall not happen, fool. Through me the good,
The capable, and wise, and they alone,
Shall be, from henceforth, rich.

BLEPS. What do you mean?
You've bagged so big a pile?

CHREM. O woe is me!
You'll ruin——

BLEPS. As it seems to me, it's you
Will do the ruining.

CHREM. Impossible,
For Plutus, my dear reprobate, is mine.

BLEPS. What sort of Plutus yours?

CHREM. The god himself.

BLEPS. And where is he?

CHREM. Indoors.

BLEPS. Where?

CHREM. In my house.

BLEPS. In your house?

¹ The mina was one-sixtieth of a talent. Cf. above, p. 11, n. (1).

² The reference probably is to a picture of the children of Heracles supplicating the people of Athens for protection from their persecutor, Eurystheus. Pamphilus, of Amphipolis, was a famous painter.

- CHREM. Surely.
BLEPS. To perdition, sir!
Plutus with you?
CHREM. I swear it!
BLEPS. Is it true?
CHREM. I say so.
BLEPS. Will you swear by Hestia?¹
CHREM. Aye, by Poseidon.
BLEPS. Mean you The Marine?²
CHREM. Marine and non-Marine, if such there be.
BLEPS. Why don't you pass him on to us, your friends?
CHREM. The business is not yet so far advanced.
BLEPS. Not to the sharing-point?
CHREM. Believe me, no;
It is essential first that we two—
BLEPS. Yes?
CHREM. Vision restore.
BLEPS. Vision? To whom? Explain.
CHREM. Vision, somehow, to Plutus, as of yore.
BLEPS. Is Plutus really blind, then?
CHREM. Certainly.
BLEPS. That's why he never found his way to me.
CHREM. He soon shall find his way, if heaven befriend.
BLEPS. But should we not call in some oculist?
CHREM. What doctor is there in the city now?
The fees are gone, and skill has followed suit.³

¹ The goddess of the hearth, worshipped with Apollo and Poseidon at Delphi.

² Cf. below, p. 56.

³ Cookesley suggests that this is a hit at the avarice of the Athenians and of the physicians in particular. I prefer to think that it refers to the impoverished condition both of the State and of private citizens. See INTRODUCTION, pp. ix, x.

BLEPS. Let's think.

CHREM. There is no doctor.

BLEPS. No, not one.

CHREM. The best plan, and the plan which long ago

I was myself preparing to employ,

Is to the temple of Asclepios¹

To take him, and there put him into bed.

BLEPS. By all that's holy, far away the best.

So waste no time, but some one thing at least

Do, and do quickly.

CHREM. I'll be off at once.

BLEPS. Hasten away then.

CHREM. Going, going, gone.

*Enter POVERTY, a gaunt and pale female, who stops CHREMYLUS
as he is leaving the stage.*

POVERTY. O puny pair of mortal miscreants!

Who dare a frantic, foul, forbidden deed,

Whither away? Why do ye flee from me?

Will ye not stop?

BLEPS. Oh, save us, Heracles!²

POVERTY. Wretches ye are and wretchedly shall die;

Past all endurance your temerity;

Nor god nor man hath ever yet presumed

To make the like adventure; ye are doomed.

CHREM. Who, pray, are you? You're marvellously pale.

¹ Asclepios (Lat. Æsculapius) was in post-Homeric times worshipped in Greece as the god of healing. There were temples in his honour in many places; the most famous was at Epidaurus. The worship of Asclepios was introduced into Athens in 420 B.C. (Ferguson, *Hellenistic Athens*, p. 217.)

² Invoked as the slayer of monsters. (See Æschylus, *Eum.* 1044.)

BLEPS. A Fury, p'r'aps, out of some tragedy ;

She's got a rather mad and tragic stare.

CHREM. She has no torches.¹

BLEPS. All the worse for her.

POVERTY. Who think you that I am ?

CHREM. An ale-wife or

A porridge-vendor. Only such a wench

Would have so screamed at us, though wronged in naught.

POVERTY. I, wronged in naught? You've done me direst wrong,

Trying to banish me from Attica.

CHREM. Can't you take refuge in the convicts' pit?

Say who you are ; we've waited far too long.

POVERTY. She who will vengeance wreak on you to-day

For plotting so to make her vanish hence.

BLEPS. Is she the barmaid in the neighbouring street,

Who always tries to cheat me in my pots?

POVERTY. No, I am Poverty ; long years your mate.

BLEPS. Apollo! Heaven! Where can we escape? (*Tries to run away*)

CHREM. What are you doing, fool? Most craven beast, (*stopping him*)

Won't you stand here and hold your ground with me?

BLEPS. Not for the world.

CHREM. Why not remain? Are we,

Two men against one woman, to retreat?

BLEPS. We must, for, stupid, she is Poverty,

And Poverty's the deadliest thing alive.

¹ The Furies were represented in tragedy, as *e.g.* in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus (see v. 1044), with torches in their hands. So is Cassandra, in her madness, in the *Troades* of Euripides (vv. 308-10).

CHREM. I tell you we shall perpetrate a crime

Unparalleled in guilt, if we desert

The god instead of fighting to the death.

BLEPS. What might or arms have we wherein to trust?

Is there a shield or breastplate which this hag

Has not disposed of to the pawnbroker?¹

CHREM. Courage! I know the god will, by himself,

Triumph, and bring to naught her naughty² wiles.

POVERTY. And do you dare to ope your mouths, you scum,

Taken red-handed in your villainy?

CHREM. Accursed crone, we never did you wrong;

Why did you come and pelt us with abuse?

POVERTY. You're scheming to give Plutus back his sight;

Suppose you, pray, you wrong me not in this?

CHREM. How wrong we you in this, if we thereby

Procure a blessing for the human race?

POVERTY. What blessing?

CHREM. As you ask, I will explain;

Your banishment, imprimis, out of Hellas.

POVERTY. My banishment? What worse calamity

Could you inflict upon mankind?

CHREM. Why, this,

To drop our project through forgetfulness.

POVERTY. The very point which I desire first

To argue with you two; if I can prove

That I, and I alone, supply mankind

With happiness, and the race lives through me,

You yield; and, if I fail, then work your will.

¹ See INTRODUCTION, p. x.

² This is an attempt to represent the play upon the words *τροπαῖον*—*τρόπων* in the original.

CHREM. Do you, vile thing, dare to maintain such views?

POVERTY. Aye, and you'd better heed; quite easily

I'll prove, I trow, you make a grave mistake,

In your proposal to enrich the just.

CHREM. Ho! stocks and cudgels, to the rescue here!

POVERTY. You should not shout and shriek, but listen first.

CHREM. Could any man who heard such trash, refrain

From loud remonstrance?

POVERTY. Any man of sense.

CHREM. Well, what shall I inscribe in the record

For fine, if you're defeated?

POVERTY. What you like.

CHREM. That's fair.

POVERTY. If you two fail, you pay the same.

CHREM. Do you think twenty deaths will be enough?

BLEPS. For her. A brace will do for you and me.

POVERTY. Then come to them at once without delay,

No sound objection can still bar the way.¹

(The disputants take their places on the R. and L.)

CHORUS. Now something clever you must say, whereby you'll
win success

In wordy warfare facing her, and show no feebleness.

CHREM. It's plain, I think, to all alike, whatever their degree,

That it is honest folk who ought to have prosperity,

But the reverse should happen to the base and godless man;

So, wishing this, we've hit upon a good, grand, working plan;

¹ The Greek text and the exact meaning of this and the preceding line are alike uncertain. I think that they mean "Come at once to the argument, in which you will fail, and will therefore pay the penalty of failure, which is death; what further opposition can anyone now make to this?"

A plan, in spite of all our zeal, most difficult to find.
If Plutus now regain his sight and cease to wander blind,
The upright he will visit and will never more forsake,
But shun the godless and the base. Then the whole world
he'll make

Honest and rich and reverent alway toward things divine;
Who ever could contrive a more beneficent design?

BLEPS. No one. To that I pledge my oath; don't ask her what
she'd say.

CHREM. Let us regard the life of man as it is lived to-day:

Who does not feel its stress insane and even diabolic?

Where multitudes around us of evil-doers frolic

In wealth which they have won by sin, whilst many good you
see

Wretched and hungry, dwellers oft in thy house, Poverty.

Argal, if Plutus end all this by ceasing to be blind,

We're on the path a boon supreme, I say, to give mankind.

POVERTY. O dotards both, most easily seduced from wisdom's train,

Fellows in silliness of speech and enterprise insane,

I say you will not profit, if you get your hearts' desire;

For, should his vision, as of old, the god of wealth acquire,

And himself redistribute, giving all an equal part,

None then will study science, and none then will practise art;

But art and science vanished from amongst you, who will go

To work the forge, to build the ship, to turn the wheel, to sew,

To mould the brick out of the clay, to put the boot together,

To do the washing of the clothes, to tan the hide to leather,

To plough the plain, and Deo's¹ fruit in harvest time collect,

If man can live in idleness and all these works neglect?

¹ A not uncommon variant of Demeter.

CHREM. That's nonsense. In the catalogue which you have just supplied

There's not a single item that slave-labour won't provide.

POVERTY. How will you get the labour?

CHREM. Why, by buying slaves, of course.

POVERTY. Who'll sell slaves, when he's wealthy?

CHREM. We are sure to come across

A merchant here from Thessaly, where kidnapping's a trade,
Eager enough to realise his profit on a raid.

POVERTY. But, in the first place, with the scheme to which you thus adhere,

The very trade of kidnappers will wholly disappear:

Who will be willing, when the gain is no consideration,

To put his life in jeopardy by such an occupation?

In fine, you'll have to delve and plough and do all that's unpleasant,

So that your future life will be far harder than the present.

CHREM. May all the ills which you predict upon your head be laid!

POVERTY. No more for you sound sleep in bed, for beds will not be made;

Nor upon rugs; for who will weave whose purse has gold inside?

You'll have no liquid perfume to offer to your bride,

Nor, to adorn her, costly robes of bright and varied hue;

But, if you can't have all these things, what is wealth worth to you?

Now I can find you all you want, can give you all you crave;

For I sit by the craftsman like a mistress by her slave,

And so, because he's needy and is not with riches fed,

I make him labour with his hands to earn his daily bread.

CHREM. What are the blessings thou canst give but bath-stove burns,¹ the wail

Of grandams and of babes who pine for food without avail,
And past all computation, the number is so great,
Lice, fleas, and gnats that sorely tease by buzzing round the
pate,

Arousing one and humming, "Up, to toil on scanty fare"?
'Tis thou who dost for raiment rags and tatters make us wear;
For couch a pallet givest, made of rushes, haunt of bugs,
Which nightly slumber banish; for a carpet, rotten rugs;
A big stone for a pillow; mallow stalks in place of bread,
And, when we should have barley-cakes, dry radish-tops instead;
For chair, a riven jar's head, and, to do the meal-trough's
duty,

The side of a wine-barrel—just another broken beauty.

Of what a host of human joys I've shown the gift is thine!

POVERTY. It is on Beggary you harp; you tell her life, not mine.

CHREM. And don't we say that you and she are daughters of
one mother?

POVERTY. You, who² to Dionysius call Thrasybulus brother.

My life, by Zeus, is and shall be of quite another sort;
The beggar man, whom you describe, never possesses aught;
My poor man leads a thrifty life, no work for him too rough,
But, if he nothing has to spare, he always has enough.

CHREM. Oh, by Demeter!³ truly blest the life whereof one sees
All the frugality and toil won't furnish funeral fees.

¹ In severe weather mendicants and poor persons, for the sake of warmth, crowded round the heating apparatus of the public baths for warmth and shelter.

² *I.e.* persons who are so wrong-minded as to liken Thrasybulus, the Athenian patriot (see INTRODUCTION, p. vi), to Dionysius the tyrant of Syracuse.

³ See note (1) p. 4, above.

POVERTY. You put away all earnestness, you scoff and you deride
Unconscious of the truth that I do finer men provide
In mind and form than Plutus does. With him men get the gout
Wax fat of calf, pot-bellied, and inordinately stout;
My sons grow lean and wasp-like, to their foes a tribulation.

CHREM. No wonder they grow wasp-like, on a training of
starvation!

POVERTY. I'll come to my conclusion, and show as to morality
That good behaviour dwells with me, and Plutus loves brutality.

CHREM. It's good behaviour's habit, then, to break through walls
and steal!

POVERTY. Look at the politicians; while my restraint they feel,
The people and the State in them may safely put their trust,
But once enriched from public funds, they show themselves
unjust,

And plot against the masses and oppose the people's will.

CHREM. You're apt to slander, yet in this you've spoken truly; still
Don't plume yourself upon it; we mean to make you cry,
Who would persuade us to deem wealth less good than poverty.

POVERTY. So far you've failed to find a flaw in aught advanced by me.
But flap your wings and cackle.

CHREM. Why do all men from you flee?

POVERTY. Because I would improve them. In the young most
plain is this;

They always shun their father, though he's studying their bliss;
It is so far from easy to distinguish what is right.

CHREM. You'll then pronounce, as I suppose, great Zeus unable
quite

To apprehend correctly which has really greater worth;
He keeps wealth—

BLEPS. And this lady he packs off to us on earth.

POVERTY. O ye whose mental vision is dimmed with fancies old,
Zeus surely is not rich; the proof I clearly will unfold.
Zeus the Olympic contest holds each fifth¹ recurring year
And there himself assembles all the Hellenic name who bear;
Would he with a wild olive wreath, if rich, adorn the head
Of winning athletes? No, he'd give a golden crown instead.

CHREM. That merely shows that Zeus of gold has high
appreciation;

He's thrifty, and from all expense withholds his approbation:
So with a bit of greenery he decks the victor's pate,
And in the heavenly treasure-house lets wealth accumulate.

POVERTY. You fasten upon Zeus a crime far worse than being needy:
You make him rich, but all the time illiberal and greedy.

CHREM. I wish with a wild olive twig he'd give your top a dressing!

POVERTY. To think that you two dare deny I bring you every
blessing!

CHREM. Well, goddess Hecate² herself can furnish information
On the comparative morale of plenty and starvation:
She says the well-to-do and rich send out her monthly dinners,
But, ere the dishes are set down, they're snatched by hungry sinners.
Begone! and don't utter
A syllable more,

¹ According to the Greek inclusive reckoning. The famous Olympic games were celebrated, every four years, as we should say, at Elis in honour of Zeus Olympius.

² A gloomy deity of the infernal regions who was worshipped in Greece in post-Homeric times. At the close of each month dishes of food were set down for her at places where roads crossed.

"Ere to black Hecate's summons,
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal."

SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*, Act III. sc. 2.

I bow to your logic,

But think as before.

POVERTY. O men of Argos,¹ list to his vile words.

CHREM. Summon Pauson,² your messmate.

POVERTY. Misery, misery, what must I do?

CHREM. Go to be hanged at express rate

POVERTY. Where shall I flee?

CHREM. To the pillory,
And make all haste about it.

POVERTY. I tell you, ye
Shall send for me,
In time to come; don't doubt it.

CHREM. Then you shall return; to-day,
Take my curse and go away;
I choose wealth; for aught I care,
You may weep and tear your hair.

BLEPS. And I long, from want released,
With my wife and bairns to feast,
And, as I come home from tubbing,
Sleek of skin with oil and rubbing,
To make sport of Poverty
And her craftsmen merrily.

(*Exit* POVERTY)

CHREM. Goodbye, at last, to that old hardened hag!

Let us at once take the god off to bed

Within the temple of Asclepios.

¹ This line is made up of quotations from Euripides.

² Some well-known mendicant of the time, conjecturally identified with a painter of the name, who is referred to by Aristotle in the *Poetics* and in the *Politics*. He is mentioned in terms of ridicule in other plays of Aristophanes.

BLEPS. Aye, and with speed, lest some new meddler here
Come with our needful work to interfere.

CHREM. (*To CARIO, who appears at the door of the house*)

Cario, fetch the bed-gear presently,
And escort Plutus in befitting style
With the equipments now prepared indoors.

CHREMYLUS and BLEPSIDEMUS enter the house of CHREMYLUS.

(*Dance of CHORUS*)

(*End of Act II.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.

TIME: *Morning, a night being supposed to have elapsed since Act II.*

CARIO *and* CHORUS.

CARIO. Greybeards, who oft at the Thesean feast¹
Have supped your soup with hollow scraps of bread,
What luck, what blessedness has come to you
And all who walk with you in virtue's ways!

CHORUS. Explain thyself, thou kindest of thy kind;
Such greeting proves thee herald of good news.

CARIO. My master hath to-day fared splendidly,
Still more so, Plutus' self; he that was blind
Is blind no longer, but his eyeballs shine²
With light restored; so graciously it pleased
Asclepios to use his healing power.

CHORUS. "Glorious tidings! I could shout for joy!"³

CARIO. Like it or like it not, it is Joy's hour.

¹ In honour of Theseus, the deified hero, who according to Athenian legend, was the founder of Attic nationality, a festival was held on the 8th day of every month, at which poor citizens were fed gratis.

² The line in the Greek is said to be a parody of a verse in the *Phineus* of Sophocles.

³ This line is evidently taken from some Tragedy.

CHORUS. I shall magnify aloud
Great Asclepios,¹ endowed
With fair progeny, a light
Unto men exceeding bright.

Enter WIFE OF CHREMYLUS from the house.

W. OF CHREM. What does this uproar mean? Does it portend
He bears good tidings? I have sat and pined
Long time for this, awaiting his return.

CARIO. Quick, mistress, fetch the wine, that you yourself
May drink with us—you dearly love a drink ²—
I bring you all the blessings rolled in one.

W. OF CHREM. Where?

CARIO. In the tale which shortly you shall hear.

W. OF CHREM. Unfold the tale completely, and despatch.

CARIO. Attend then, and of this affair of weight
I will unload the whole from top to toe.

W. OF CHREM. Not on the top of me.

CARIO. What, not the weight
Of this day's fortune?

W. OF CHREM. Do not weigh me down.

CARIO. We hasted to the temple of the god,
Leading the creature then the wretchedest,
But now the happiest, beyond compare,
And the most fortunate, in all the world;
And, first, we took him down to the sea-shore
And washed him there.³

¹ See n. (1) p. 24, above. His progeny included a daughter Panacea, mentioned in this play, p. 39, below.

² Here and elsewhere Aristophanes satirises the bibulous proclivities of some of his countrywomen. For another instance in this play, see below, p. 52.

³ Both Greeks and Romans thought highly of the curative quality of sea-water.

W. OF CHREM. How nice for the old man
To shiver in a cold salt-water bath!

CARIO. This done, we brought him to the holy place ;
And, after wafers and like offerings
Had on the altar solemnly been laid,
And cake burnt in the flame Hephæstus¹ loves,
We put our Plutus properly to bed,
And each of us arranged his own straw couch.

W. OF CHREM. Say, were there others seeking the god's aid?

CARIO. Yes ; for one, Neocleides,² blind indeed,
But sharper, for a theft, than those who see ;
And many more, sick in all sorts of ways.
Well, when the verger, all the lights put out,
Came round and ordered us to go to sleep
And not to say a word, if one perchance
Should hear a noise, we, quite decorously,
Lay down to rest. But I could get no sleep ;
I was excited by a porridge pot
Which stood a little distance from the head
Of an old lady, and I felt a strange
Unearthly longing to that pot to crawl.
As I looked up, I caught sight of the priest
Snatching the cakes and the dried figs from off
The holy table. Then he went the round
Of all the altars, questing, on the chance
That wafers had been left there. All he found
He—consecrated—in a bag ; and I,
Inferring for such act great piety,
Rose up, that pot of porridge to invade.

¹ The god of fire. The line is probably borrowed from some tragic poet.

² Of this person nothing is known except what is said in this play.

W. OF CHREM. Most rash of men, did you not fear the god?

CARIO. Indeed, I did. I feared that, crown and all,
He'd come and reach the pot before myself.
You see, I'd learnt a lesson from his priest.
Well, the old lady, noticing some noise
I made in moving, to remove the pot
Upraised her hand; I gave a hissing sound,
As a snake does, and gripped it with my teeth.
She without loss of time withdrew her hand,
Rolled all her blankets round her, and lay still.
Much of the porridge I at once devoured
And, when I'd had my fill, leapt back to bed.

W. OF CHREM. Did not the god appear to you?

CARIO. Not yet.

Straightway a fear came on me, and I hid
My face beneath the bed-clothes. Then the god
Came, in a manner quite professional,
Examining each patient in his turn.
Next, by a boy, were set beside the god
Stone mortar, pestle, and little box.

W. OF CHREM. Was that of stone?

CARIO. No, not the box, of course.

W. OF CHREM. You lying rogue, you said your face was hid;
How could you see?

CARIO. Through the worn coverlet;
It had, I swear, a multitude of holes.
Setting to work on Neocleides first,
The god a poultice pounded, putting in
Three heads of Tenian¹ leek. With these he mixed

¹ Of Tenos, one of the Cyclades islands.

And in the mortar brayed the juice of figs
And squills;¹ then, after sprinkling on the mass
Sphettian² vinegar, he smeared the stuff
Over the eyelids, first reversing them
To cause more pain. Up Neocleides sprang
With shrieks and howls, and sought to flee away;
But the god laughed and said: "Sit poulticed here,
That I may keep you from a perjury
Blocking the business on Assembly days."³

W. OF CHREM. Oh, what a wise and patriotic god!

CARIO. This done, he went and sat by the bedside
Of little Plutus. First of all, he laid
His hand upon the patient's head; and, next,
With a clean towel wiped the eyelids' edge:
Then Panacea⁴ with a purple veil
Covered the head and face; this done, the god
Gave a low whistle, and there darted forth
Out of the shrine two serpents of huge size.

W. OF CHREM. Merciful Heaven!

CARIO. The pair crept quietly
Under the veil, and as it seemed to me,
Licked Plutus round the eyelids; then, before
You, madam, could toss off ten cups of wine,
Plutus rose up from bed with sight restored.
I clapped my hands together with delight,
And went to rouse my master. Instantly

¹ The Scilla maritima, or sea-onion.

² Sphettus was one of the Attic demes. Its inhabitants had a reputation for sharpness.

³ The text and the exact meaning are doubtful.

⁴ See above, p. 36, n. (1).

Both god and serpents vanished in the shrine.
You can't imagine how the patients there
Kept on embracing Plutus. They sat up
The livelong night, until the day had dawned;
Whilst loud I sang the praises of the god,
Who had so swiftly made our Plutus see,
And Neocleides blinder than before.

W. OF CHREM. How mighty is thy power, Lord and King!

(*To* CARIO)

But, tell me, where is Plutus?

CARIO. On his way.

He drew around him a prodigious crowd,
For all the poor but honest, in their joy,
Flocked to salute him and to shake his hand,
Whilst those, who by dishonest practices
Had become men of means and opulent,
Frowned on him sulkily with knitted brows.
His friends pressed after him, all garlanded,
With smiles and words of blessing; the street rang
With tramp of slippered age in rhythmic march.¹

(*To the* CHORUS)

But come ye, one and all, with one accord
Caper and dance and trip it merrily,
No one, henceforth, shall meet you at your door
And say "There is no flour left in the bin."

W. OF CHREM. And I, by Hecate,² for your good news
Would like to crown you with a string of loaves.

¹ Parody, no doubt, of some tragic verse.

² See above, p. 32, n. (2).

CARIO. Lose no more time ; your friends are almost here.

W. OF CHREM. I'll run indoors and bring the sweetmeats out,

As proper welcome for the new-bought¹ eyes.

CARIO. And I will go to meet the coming troop.

The wife of CHREMYLUS enters the house : CARIO leaves the stage R.

(Dance of CHORUS)

ACT III.

SCENE 2.

Enter PLUTUS.

PLUTUS. I make obeisance first to Helios,²
And, after him, to this far-famed domain
Of venerable Pallas,³ and to all
The land of Cecrops,⁴ which has welcomed me.
I am ashamed of my unlucky past ;
So bad were those whom I mistakenly
Consorted with, eschewing unawares
The men deserving of my fellowship ;
And thus, alas ! I did a double wrong.
All this will I reverse, and to the world
Henceforward prove that, if I gave myself
To evil-doers, it was not by choice.

¹ It was an Athenian custom to pour sweetmeats on the head of a newly-bought slave upon his first entrance into the house of his master.

² Plutus salutes Helios first, because, by the miraculous cure, he has just recovered the power to enjoy the light of the sun.

³ Pallas Athene, the "Great Goddess" of the Athenians.

⁴ The legendary first King of Attica.

Enter CHREMYLUS, with a crowd pressing closely at his heels.

CHREM. Leave me in peace! What dreadful bores success
Brings round one in a sudden crop of friends!
They nudge one and press hard against one's shins,
Parading each some semblance of good will.
All would have speech with me, and oh! the crowd
Of greybeards round me in the market-place!

Enter WIFE OF CHREMYLUS from the house.

W. OF CHREM. Hail, dearest lord: and thou too, Plutus, hail!
Come, as is ancient custom, let me take
And scatter sweetmeats over thee.

PLUTUS. No, no:
Since now for the first time, my sight restored,
I come within your hospitable doors,
I should import, and not export, a gift.

W. OF CHREM. Will you not then accept my shower of sweets?

PLUTUS. Yes, that I will, but at your hearth, indoors;
That's the right custom. So we shall escape
An imputation of vulgarity.
It ill becomes the poet-manager
To make his players on the audience
Dried figs and the like dainties scatter down,
And force a laugh by such an artifice.

W. OF CHREM. Well said; I saw how Dexinicus¹ here
Jumped up at once to scramble for the figs.

(CHREMYLUS, his WIFE, and PLUTUS enter the house.)

Dance of CHORUS.

(End of Act III.)

¹ One of the spectators.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter CARIO from the house.

CARIO. (*To the Chorus*). How sweet a thing, friends, is prosperity

That needs no outlay for its incoming!
A mass of treasures, by no fraud acquired,
Has sudden entrance forced into our house.
The bin is teeming with white barley-meal,
So are the jars with dark and odorous wine:
Every vessel—wondrous spectacle—
Is crammed with gold and silver, and the tank
Brimming with oil. The precious ointments fill
Their caskets, and dried figs the upper room.
Every cruet, dish, and kitchen pot
Has turned to brass, the lantern in a trice
To ivory. In lieu of dirty trays
Of rotten wood one looks on silver plate.
We serving-men at ‘odd and even’ play
With golden staters,¹ and within the house
My master, garlanded, is offering up
A pig, a goat, a ram, in sacrifice:

¹ The Athenian gold stater was of the value, approximately, of the English sovereign.

The smoke drove me outside. I could not stay
Beneath the roof. It made my eyelids smart.

(Enter from R. a JUST MAN with a youthful attendant.)

JUST MAN. Boy, follow close with me, that we may reach
The god's abode.

CARIO. Whom have we coming here?

JUST MAN. One who was wretched, but is happy now.

CARIO. So you, I judge, are one of the right sort.

JUST MAN. Exactly.

CARIO. What then do you want?

JUST MAN. I seek

The god; for he has done great things for me.
My father's heir, I had a competence,
Wherewith to friends in need I ministered,
Esteeming that a useful policy.

CARIO. I guess your fortune quickly disappeared.

JUST MAN. Precisely so.

CARIO. Then came your misery.

JUST MAN. Precisely so. I thought that those, whom I
Succoured in their distress, would prove my friends,
Steadfast and true, at time of need; but they
Avoided me, pretending not to see.

CARIO. And sneered at you, I'm sure.

JUST MAN. Precisely so.

The drought in cup and dish meant social death.
Now things are changed, and therefore fittingly
I come to pay my debt of thanks in prayer.

CARIO. But, for the god, what means the threadbare cloak
Which your lad here is carrying? Explain.

JUST MAN. I bring this as a votive offering.

CARIO. It's not the cloak you at Eleusis wore

When an initiate at the Mysteries?¹

JUST MAN. No, but I've shivered in it thirteen years.

CARIO. These shoes?

JUST MAN. They wintered with me, like the cloak.

CARIO. Are these too brought as votive offerings?

JUST MAN. They are.

CARIO. What charming presents for the god!

(Enter from R. an INFORMER² with a companion.)

INFORMER. O cursed fate! I'm ruined utterly!

Not three, nor four, nor five, nor twelve, I say,

But twice five thousand times, unfortunate!

Woe, woe! Too strong my demon of ill-luck.

CARIO. Guardian Apollo and ye blessed gods,

What in the world afflicts this creature here?

INFORMER. Am I not now afflicted grievously,

Bereft of everything my house contained

All through this god, who shall be blind again,

Unless in law there is no virtue left?

JUST MAN. I've a shrewd notion of the state of things.

The comer is some man in evil case,

And, on the view, a man of evil stamp.

CARIO. In being ruined, then, he shows good taste.

INFORMER. Where, where is he who promised that, if once

His sight returned, he by himself forthwith

¹ The Great Mysteries (τὰ μέγιστα) were celebrated yearly at Eleusis, in Attica, in honour of Demeter. The Lesser, or preliminary, Mysteries, in honour of Persephone, were celebrated at Agræ, near Athens. Cario, seeing the dilapidated condition of the cloak, says, ironically, "I suppose this was not your vestment as an initiate at the Great Mysteries." The robe of initiation was usually preserved by the initiate with special care.

² See note (1) on p. 3 above.

³ An Attic silver coin worth about $9\frac{3}{4}d.$ of our money.

But of your business offer no account ;

Neither of you is here for any good.

CARIO. Not for your good, I swear ; be sure of that.

INFORMER. I am ; for I declare you two propose

To dine upon the proceeds of my goods.

CARIO. May you and may your witness, for truth's sake,

Gorge yourselves, till you burst, on emptiness !

INFORMER. Do you deny the charge ? This house, ye knaves,

Is full of sliced fish and of roasted meats.

(Goes about sniffing)

JUST MAN. Do you scent something, wretch ?

CARIO.

Cold air, perhaps,

He's got so thin a coat upon his back.

INFORMER. O Zeus and Powers of Heaven, must I endure

To be insulted thus ? Oh ! how I grieve

That I, the good man, I, the patriot,

Should be so treated !

JUST MAN.

You a patriot ?

You a good man ?

INFORMER.

Beyond comparison.

JUST MAN. Now answer me a question.

INFORMER.

What is that ?

JUST MAN. Are you a farmer ?

INFORMER.

Think you me so mad ?

JUST MAN. A merchant ?

INFORMER.

Well, I say so, when it suits.¹

JUST MAN. Have you learnt any trade ?

¹ "Athenian merchants were exempted from going to war and from paying taxes. Hence there were always some who, to avoid paying taxes, pretended to be merchants."—*Cookesley*.

INFORMER.

Not I, indeed.

JUST MAN. If you do nothing, how do you exist?

INFORMER. In public business, and in private too,

I am the universal manager.

JUST MAN. You? How?

INFORMER.

I choose to be.¹

JUST MAN.

How can you, wretch,

Be good, when you earn general dislike

By interfering where you've no concern?

INFORMER. What, booby? Is it no concern of mine

To benefit my State with all my might?

JUST MAN. Is meddling much a public benefit?

INFORMER. It is a benefit to aid the laws,

And let no breach escape its penalty.

JUST MAN. Does not the State appoint its magistrates

For just this duty?

INFORMER.

But who prosecutes?

JUST MAN. The citizen who chooses.

INFORMER.

I am he;

So on me rests the business of the State.

JUST MAN. By Zeus, it has a scurvy champion!

Had you the option, would you not prefer

A tranquil life of ease?

INFORMER.

What you suggest

Is a sheep's life, inert and purposeless.

JUST MAN. Will you not change your mind?

² In the Greek word *βούλομαι* used in this line, and the words *ὁ βουλόμενος* below ("The citizen who chooses"), there is a reference to Athenian law which permitted anyone (lit., the man who chooses) to prefer a public charge. So Cario makes fun of the informer when, later on, he says that he is the man "who chooses" to attack him.

INFORMER. Not for the wealth

Of Battus,¹ or the gift of Plutus' self.

JUST MAN. Off with your cloak!

CARIO. (*To the INFORMER*) Sirrah! he speaks to you.

JUST MAN. Take off your shoes.

CARIO. All this he says to you.

INFORMER. I stand here, and I challenge the attack

Of him of you who chooses.

CARIO. I am he.

(*CARIO seizes the INFORMER and strips him of cloak and shoes
whilst his companion slips away*)

INFORMER. Woe's me! I'm being stripped in open day.

CARIO. Yes, for you claim to get your daily bread

By meddling in the affairs of other folk.

INFORMER. (*Turning to the place where his companion had been
standing*)

Do you see this? I call on you to be

Witness of this assault.

CARIO. The friend, whom you

Brought here to be your witness, has decamped.

INFORMER. Woe's me! I have been caught alone, and trapped.

CARIO. You've cause now, have you not, for crying out?

INFORMER. Again I say, Woe's me!

CARIO. (*To JUST MAN*) Now let me have

Your threadbare cloak, to put it on this wretch.

¹ Was the founder of Cyrene, and its first ruler, probably about 640 B.C. The same name was borne by several of his successors. Silphium (*assafœtida*) was engraved upon the coins of Cyrene, and so the 'Silphium of Battus,' which is the literal translation of the Greek, means the 'wealth of Battus.'

JUST MAN. No, don't do that; I dedicated it
To Plutus, long ago.

CARIO. Where could it find,
As votive gift, a fitter resting-place
(*Puts the cloak on the INFORMER*)

Than on the shoulders of a knave and thief?
None but fine robes can Plutus rightly wear.

JUST MAN. But, then, my shoes—what can be done with them?

CARIO. I'll nail them to this fellow's forehead, as
They might be nailed to a wild olive-tree.¹

(*Fastens the shoes to the INFORMER'S forehead*)

INFORMER. I shall retire; for you two, as I see,
I am no match; but if I can attract
One ally, wooden dummy² though he be,
I'll make your mighty god, this very day,
Of his misdoing pay the penalty;
For it is clear as can be that he schemes
Singly and by himself to overthrow
The Commonwealth, though he has not obtained
Either the Senate's³ or the Assembly's vote.

JUST MAN. (*To the INFORMER, as he is leaving the stage*)
Now, as you're marching in my panoply,

¹ Both Greeks and Romans were in the habit of affixing votive offerings to trees and posts. (See Virgil, *Æn.* XII. 768.) A Scholiast refers to the practice of nailing the head or foot of a beast slain in the chase to a tree, in honour of Artemis.

² Lit. "of fig-wood." As this wood is weak and worthless, the epithet was used to signify that which is of that character. And so, conversely, strong character was described by the analogy of strong timber. Hesiod (*Op.* 145) speaks of man made *ἐκ μελιᾶν*, "of ashen wood," and Aristophanes, in the *Acharnians* (v. 180), of *πρίννοι γέροντες*, "old men of oak," i.e. sturdy, just as Garrick, in the well-known nautical ditty, says "Heart of oak are our men." In this passage there is, no doubt, also an untranslatable play upon *σύνκινος* and *συκοφάντης*.

³ The Senate (*βουλὴ*) of 500 constituted by Cleisthenes.

Run to the bath-house¹ and there warm yourself
Upstanding, like the leader of a band ;²
That was my station in the days of old.

CARIO. The bath-keeper will take him by the waist
And chuck him out, for he'll at sight detect
His evil character ;³ but let us both
Go in, that you may pray and thank the god.
(CARIO and the JUST MAN enter the house of CHREMYLUS)
(*Dance of CHORUS*)

ACT IV.

SCENE 2.

*Enter from R. an OLD WOMAN, grey-haired, with painted face, gaily
and youthfully dressed, with a tray,⁴ on which are
cakes and sweetmeats.*

O. WOMAN. (*To the CHORUS.*) Please tell me, dear old gentlemen,
is this
Really the house where the new god abides,
Or have I altogether missed the way ?
CHORUS. Sweet little maid, whose gracious speech proclaims
Your tender youth—you've hit the very spot.

¹ See p. 30 note (1) above.

² The Informer is depicted as holding the place of Coryphæus, or conductor, to the chorus of beggars who surround the stove of the bath-house—"a place to which he would be entitled by his pre-eminence in misery and rags" (*Cookesley*).

³ The bath-keepers had to keep a watch upon visitors, as thieves haunted the public baths in order to steal the property of bathers.

⁴ There is nothing in the context to show whether the Old Woman, like the Just Man, brought an attendant slave, or carried the tray herself. The former view is the more probable.

O. WOMAN. I'll try to rouse some one within the house.

(*As she goes to knock at door, CHREMYLUS comes out*)

CHREM. No need; I am its master, at your service.

Tell me the purpose of your visit here.

O. WOMAN. Dear sir, you see a woman grossly wronged;

For, from the moment he regained his sight,

The god has robbed my life of all its worth.

CHREM. What do you mean? Perhaps you've played the part
Of she-informer in the ladies' world?

O. WOMAN. Never.

CHREM. Of self-made¹ jury-woman, then,
Upon the Wine-Court panel?

O. WOMAN. Ah, you mock,

But I, poor maid, am pricked to death by love.

CHREM. Make haste, and of this love-prick tell the tale.

O. WOMAN. Hear then. I loved a youth. He was not rich,

But he was fair of face and beautiful

And good at heart. If I did aught require,

He did my bidding, prettily and well,

And I in turn obliged him every way.

CHREM. What was it that he mostly begged of you?

¹ *I.e.* without having a right to sit there by ballot. (See n. (2) on p. 16 above.) The joke lies in the substitution of *ἐπιβες* (drank) for *ἐκπιβες* (judged). Here, as in a previous line on p. 36 (see n. (2) above), Aristophanes twits his countrywomen with their love of wine. Another possible version, if the negative *οὐ* is joined with the principal verb *ἐπιβες*, and not with the participle *λαχούσα*, would be "Did you not often, after getting by ballot your place on the jury panel—drink—in the Wine-Court?" But the joke has more point if the ironical inquiry of Chremylus involves the suggestion not only that the lady sat in the Wine-Court, but sat there without the right to do so. It appears from a passage in the *Lysistrata* (l. 145) that the Greeks, and from Ovid, *De Arte Amandi*, lib. i. II. 581, that the Romans had a practice, at banquets, of casting lots for the order of drinking. (See Holden's ed. *Aristophanes*, not. crit. p. 484.)

O. WOMAN. Not much; his awe of me was so profound:

But he would ask for twenty drachmas, just
To buy a cloak, or eight, to pay for shoes;
Tell me to get his sisters a new gown,
Or his mamma a mantle; or, perchance,
He'd beg from me six bushels¹ of wheat flour.

CHREM. Oh, by Apollo, a most modest list!
Beyond all doubt, he stood in awe of you.

O. WOMAN. Yes, and he always said he asked for love
And not through greed, so that whene'er he wore
A cloak I'd given he might think of me.

CHREM. A most uncommonly devoted swain.

O. WOMAN. But now the wretched creature is no more
Of the same mind, but is changed utterly.
For, when I sent to him the bun you see,
With all the other sweetmeats on the tray,
And told him by a message, "I shall come
To meet thee in the gloaming——"

CHREM. What did he?

O. WOMAN. Returned me all my gifts and with them sent
This milk-cake as a present, on the terms
That I no more came near him, and these words:—
"Milesians were valiant long ago."²

CHREM. It's plain he is not a bad youth.³ Grown rich,
Porridge he finds no longer to his taste.
When he was poor, no relish came amiss.

¹ Lit. 'four medimni.' The medimnus was equivalent to $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels.

² *I.e.* you were once beautiful, but are so no longer. The proverb in regard to the people of Miletus is said to have sprung from an oracular answer to an inquiry of the Carians (or, as others say, of Polycrates of Samos), as to the desirability of the Milesians as allies in war.

³ Because, had he not been good, Plutus would not have enriched him.

O. WOMAN. No, by The Holy Pair,¹ he never missed,
When poor, a day in coming to my house.

CHREM. To join your funeral?

O. WOMAN. No, he simply yearned
To hear my voice.

CHREM. He yearned, I rather think,
To have your money.

O. WOMAN. If he saw me sad,
He'd fondly call me 'little duck' and 'dove.'

CHREM. And then perhaps he'd ask for shoe-money.

O. WOMAN. And just because a person stared at me
As I was riding in my open car
At the Great Mysteries,² he made me cry
For a whole day. He was so very jealous!

CHREM. He wished no sharer in his feast, I guess.

O. WOMAN. He used to say, I had such perfect hands.

CHREM. Yes, when they held the drachmas out to him.

O. WOMAN. He said, my skin smelt sweet.

CHREM. A compliment,
I swear by Zeus, quite reasonably paid,
If you with wine from Thasos³ filled his cup.

O. WOMAN. He said my glance was mild and beautiful.

CHREM. (*Aside*) He was no fool, but knew how to devour
The commissariat of a faded dame.

O. WOMAN. The god, who vaunts his aid of the oppressed,
In this affair, friend, acts unrighteously.

CHREM. What must he do? Speak, and it shall be done.

¹ Demeter and Persephone. A form of adjuration used especially by women.

² The Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis. See above, p. 45, note (1).

³ An island off the coast of Thrace, famous for its wine.

O. WOMAN. As I've been kind to him, it's just, I vow,
To force the youth that kindness to repay,
And if he fails, no blessing should be his.

CHREM. Surely he gave you what he had—his love.

O. WOMAN. He swore that he'd be loyal to the end.

CHREM. Truly: but now he thinks that end has come.

O. WOMAN. Aye, grief has wasted me to nothing, friend.

CHREM. Senile decay, not grief, I rather guess.

O. WOMAN. Why, you might draw my body through a ring.¹

CHREM. Yes, if that ring should be a corn-sieve's rim.

(*Enter A YOUNG MAN gaily dressed and carrying a torch and wreaths.*)

O. WOMAN. Hah! here is my dear youth; he comes this way,
The very youth I've been accusing so;
He seems bound for a revel.

CHREM. So he is;
At any rate he carries torch and wreaths.

Y. MAN. Good day to you.

O. WOMAN. What says he?

Y. MAN. Ancient friend,
You've grown grey fast, I solemnly declare.

O. WOMAN. Alas! what insults have I to endure!

CHREM. It looks as if he had not seen your face
For a long time.

O. WOMAN. A long time, impudence!
Why, he was at my house but yesterday.

CHREM. His case in this, then, is peculiar,
His vision is improved by drunkenness.

O. WOMAN. No; it's his constant habit to be rude.

¹ So Falstaff says (Shakesp. *K. Henry IV.* (Pt. I. Act II. Sc. 4): "I was not an eagle's talon in the waist; I could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring."

Y. MAN. (*Putting his torch close to the face of the OLD WOMAN*)

Poseidon of the sea! Ye gods that guard
The old! What hosts of wrinkles in her face!

O. WOMAN. Oh! Oh! Don't put your torch so near!

CHREM. She's wise;

For, if a single spark alight on her,
She'll burn up like an old dry harvest-wreath.

Y. MAN. Wilt come and play a game as in old days?

O. WOMAN. Where, sinner?

Y. MAN. Where we stand, with nuts.

O. WOMAN. What game?

Y. MAN. Guessing the number of your teeth.

CHREM. Even I

Shall win at that; three, p'r'aps, or four, I guess.

Y. MAN. Pay forfeit: she has only one back tooth.

O. WOMAN. Audacious man, I think you must be daft
Before the face of all these gentlemen
To make me thus your washpot.

Y. MAN. It were well

For you, if you were washed.

CHREM. I differ there;

She's beautiful for ever as she is,
But, if you washed off the enamelling,
The furrowed squalor of her face would show.

O. WOMAN. Your ribald speech, sir, ill befits your age.

Y. MAN. He's trying to make love to you, I think;
As if I didn't see.

O. WOMAN. Make love to me?

You horrid wretch! I swear that it is false,
By Aphrodite.

- CHREM. And by Hecate
I swear the same—I'm not so mad as that.
But now, young man, I will not suffer you
To scorn this maid.
- Y. MAN. I love her to excess.
- CHREM. And yet she doth indict you.
- Y. MAN. On what charge?
- CHREM. That you have used her rudely and have said
 " Milesians were valiant long ago." ¹
- Y. MAN. I will not fight with you for her.
- CHREM. Indeed?
- Y. MAN. Such my respect for age, that I will yield
 To you what I would yield to no one else;
 As things are—take my blessing—and the maid.
- CHREM. I know, I know your thoughts; of this affair
 You'd make an end.
- O. WOMAN. But who would sanction this?
- Y. MAN. No converse could I hold with one whose charms
 Have felt the wear of thirteen thousand years!
- CHREM. You've drunk the wine, and you must drain the lees.
- Y. MAN. But they are very old and flavourless.
- CHREM. Surely a strainer will set that to rights.
- Y. MAN. Well, come you in; I wish to consecrate
 These wreaths of mine an offering to the god.
- O. WOMAN. And I have somewhat I would say to him.
- Y. MAN. Then I stay here.
- CHREM. Courage, be not afraid:
 She shall not ravish you.

¹ See note (2) on p. 53 above.

Y. MAN. That's comforting ;

Quite long enough was my old servitude.

O. WOMAN. Go you in front ; I follow close behind.

CHREM. Lord, how tenaciously this poor old thing

Clings to him—like a limpet to the rock !

CHREMYLUS, *the* YOUNG MAN, *and the* OLD WOMAN *go into*
the house.

(*Dance of* CHORUS)

(*End of Act IV.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter the god HERMES,¹ who knocks at the door and hides behind it as it is opened by CARIO.

CARIO. Who's knocking at our door? What does it mean?

There's no one here. This door assuredly

Deserves a drubbing for a false alarm.

HERMES. (*Coming forward*)

Ho! Cario, stop.

CARIO. Say, sirrah, was it you

Who loudly knocked?

HERMES. No, I was on the eve

Of doing so, when you prevented me

By opening from within. Now lose no time,

But run indoors and fetch your master out,

And then his wife, and then his babes, and then

¹ The fabled son of Zeus and Maia (Lat. Mercurius). He was a deity with many attributes, but his peculiar place in the Greek mythology was that of messenger, or herald, of the gods, endowed as such with divine skill in speech and powers of invention and resource—not always honestly employed. In ancient art he was represented with winged ankles, wearing a hat with wings, and carrying the caduceus, or herald's staff, adorned with two serpents. His cunning, even in babyhood, is amusingly told in the Homeric hymn to Hermes, which has been translated by Shelley, and is portrayed in the picture of "Mercury" painted in 1770 by Sir Joshua Reynolds. In comedy, at any rate, as his appeal to Cario's sense of gratitude (below, p. 62) shows, he was treated as a god who presided over thievish roguery. And Horace (*Od.*, I. 10. 5.) says he will sing of him as "Callidum quicquid placuit jocoso Condere furto."

His serving-men, and then the dog, and then
Yourself, and then the sow.

CARIO. What's in the wind?

Explain yourself.

HERMES. Miscreant, Zeus desires

To stir you up together in one pan
And hurl the lot into the great abyss.

CARIO. Herald's who bring such tidings get cut tongues.¹

Why are we menaced by this hostile plan?

HERMES. Ye wrought a deed of sin unparalleled.

For since the hour when Plutus sight regained
Men to us gods no longer offer up
Rich cake or laurel-wreath or frankincense
Or victim on the altar.

CARIO. Nor shall they

Ever again; your tutelage of us
Was simply shocking.

HERMES. As to the other gods,

I do not care so much—but, look at me,
I'm ruined, pulverised.

CARIO. Unselfish sage!

HERMES. Every female vintner hitherto

For me each morning at the break of day
Laid ready tipsy-cake, dried figs, and honey,
All the nice things which Hermes ought to eat:
Now I go up to bed² a starving god.

¹ An allusion both to the offering of the tongue of a sacrificed animal to Hermes as the god of eloquence and the interpreter of heaven, and also to the deserts of one who brought such a message of woe.

² Another interpretation of the sense of the word ἀναβάδην in this line would make the passage mean "I rest, a hungry god, with my legs up," *i.e.* in a reclining position. I think

CARIO. Just punishment, confess it, for the loss
 Inflicted by your casual pilferings
 Upon the generous givers.

HERMES. Oh, hard fate!

Oh, for the bun baked once a month¹ for me!

CARIO. In vain you mourn and call the absent love.²

HERMES. Oh, for the pig's flesh which I gobbled up!

CARIO. Try pig-skin dancing³ here in the open air.

HERMES. Oh, for the nice hot tripe I used to eat!

CARIO. You look as if some pain now wrung your own.

HERMES. Oh, for a cup of glorious half-and-half!

CARIO. Drink this (*offers him a cup*) and then be off at lightning
 speed.

HERMES. Will not you lend a friend a helping hand?

CARIO. Yes, if your want is one I can supply.

HERMES. Get me a well-baked loaf of bread to eat,
 And from the sacrifice indoors a nice
 Big slice of meat.

that the Greek admits either meaning. But it seems to me that the latter interpretation misses a point in Hermes's complaint. He wanders about on earth all day, searching for the nice things which used to be offered to him, and after his weary and useless quest he has to go to rest in heaven (*lit.* aloft) at night with an empty stomach. The same adverb is elsewhere used by Aristophanes, in the meaning which I prefer. (See the *Acharnians*, vv. 399, 410.)

¹ Literally on the 4th day, *i.e.* of the month. This was thus honoured because it was supposed to be the day of the month on which Hermes was born.

"The fourth day of the moon
 On which him bore the venerable May."

SHELLEY, *Translation of the Hymn to Mercury*.

² This line was a proverb, said to be derived from the legend of Heracles searching for Hylas, after he had been carried off by nymphs. An aerial voice in these words told Heracles the uselessness of his quest.

³ The *ἄσκος* (Lat. *uter*) was a goat-skin or pig-skin, greased on the outside and inflated with air, upon which the players danced at the Attic Dionysiac festival called *Ascolia* (*Ἀσכולία*). Such dancing is illustrated, from an engraved gem, in Rich's *Companion to the Latin and Greek Lexicon*, p. 710.

CARIO. All export is tabooed.

HERMES. And yet, whene'er you filched your master's plate,
'Twas I who saved you from discovery.

CARIO. On terms of partnership, burglarious friend ;
You had your share—an excellent meringue.

HERMES. My share indeed ! You ate it up yourself.

CARIO. Fairly, for, if detection followed crime,
You never shared the whipping which I got.

HERMES. Phylæ¹ is yours, so grant an amnesty,
And, for heaven's sake, admit me as your chum.

CARIO. What ? Will you leave the gods and dwell on earth ?

HERMES. Life here is so much snugger than up there.

CARIO. Is it quite nice your country to desert ?

HERMES. "Where a man prospers, there his country is."²

CARIO. If you did come, what could we use you for ?

HERMES. Install me as a turnkey by the door.

CARIO. A turnkey ? We've no turning work to do.

HERMES. As sales-clerk then ?

CARIO. Now we are millionaires,
A huckster Hermes why should we maintain ?

¹ This is a reference to the capture of Phylæ, a fortress on the frontiers of Attica, by Thrasybulus at the head of the Athenian exiles and their friends, which was the first stage in the successful campaign against the Thirty Tyrants. (Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. viii. pp. 361 *sqq.*) The ultimate triumph of Thrasybulus and the restoration of the democracy were accompanied by a liberal amnesty (*Ibid.* p. 381). Hermes says, in effect, to Cario, "You have had the good luck ; be generous to me and don't remember old grudges."

² A parody, if not an actual quotation, of a line in some tragedy. For the sentiment, compare "Itaque ad omnem rationem Teucris vox accommodari potest 'Patria est, ubicunque est bene'" (Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* v. 37), and—

"All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens."

SHAKESPEARE, *Richard II.*, Act I. sc. 3.

HERMES. As diplomatic agent?

CARIO. That's absurd;

We want plain dealing, not diplomacy.

HERMES. Call me then guide.

CARIO. As Plutus has his sight,

We shall not in the future need a guide.

HERMES. Then 'Hermes, steward of festivals' I'll be:

You can't say no to that. It is most meet

The god of wealth should solemn contests hold

Of both athletic skill and minstrelsy.

CARIO. What a fine thing it is to get a name

In many diverse parts!¹ That is the way

Whereby this god has found a livelihood;

No wonder jurymen oft strive to be

Empanelled² in a lot of courts at once!

HERMES. It's settled, is it not? I may come in?

CARIO. Yes, and now go yourself to the well-side

And rinse these bellies; so forthwith to prove

'Hermes the scullion' is your proper rôle.

CARIO and HERMES enter the house.

(Dance of CHORUS)

¹ The various occupations suggested by Hermes as "huckster," (*Ἐμπολαῖος*), "diplomatic agent" (*Δόλιος*), "Guide" (*Ἡγεμόνιος* or *Πομπαιῖος*), and "Steward of Festivals" (*Ἐναγώνιος*), were in fact offices in respect of which Hermes was worshipped in Greece.

² See note (2) p. 16 above.

ACT V.

SCENE 2.

Enter from R. a PRIEST of Zeus.

PRIEST. Who'll show me where I can find Chremylus?

(Enter CHREMYLUS from the house)

CHREM. How fare you, friend?

PRIEST. How fare I? Very ill.

Ever since Plutus here recovered sight,
I have been starving. I've no food to eat,
Although of Zeus the Saviour I am priest.

CHREM. Expound, I beg, the cause of this distress.

PRIEST. No one now cares to sacrifice.

CHREM. And why?

PRIEST. Because all now are rich. In the old days
Of poverty, a merchant, who returned
Safe home from travel, or a criminal,
Who had been found 'not guilty' in the Court,
Gave a thank-offering; or some man, perhaps,
Gaining good omens from his sacrifice,
Invited me, the priest, to be his guest:
Now no one offers any sacrifice,
Or even, saving some who thither come
For basest ends, enters the shrine at all.

CHREM. Are not fixed fees paid by such visitors?

PRIEST. I'm, anyhow, resolved to bid farewell
To Zeus the Saviour, and to settle here.

CHREM. Take heart; with heaven's help, you shall do well,
 For Zeus the Saviour has himself arrived,
 A self-invited guest.

PRIEST. Good news indeed!

CHREM. We purpose very soon—but you must wait—
 To install Plutus where he dwelt of yore
 The constant guardian of the Treasury¹
 Of the Great Goddess. Now, let somebody
 Bring hither lighted torches, that therewith
 You may precede the god, and show the way.

PRIEST. Aye, that is proper.

O. WOMAN. (*Coming out of the house.*) What am I to do?

CHREM. Take you the earthen vessels² we shall use
 In the installation, and upon your head
 Bear them with pomp; as for embroidered gown,
 That you've been wearing ever since you came.

O. WOMAN. And what about the object of my call?

CHREM. You shall have all you covet; for the youth
 Shall visit you to-day towards eventide.

O. WOMAN. If you will pledge your solemn word to me
 That he shall come, I'll be your pot-bearer.

(*She raises the pots on her head*)

¹ The Opisthodomus, or "building in the rear," of the temple of Athene on the Acropolis. It is uncertain whether the temple referred to is the Parthenon or the temple of Athene Polias. The more important temples in Greece, as, e.g., at Delphi and Ephesus, included in their precincts treasuries for the safe keeping both of public and of private moneys. The temple of Artemis at Ephesus was "a common treasury for all Asia," and Xenophon, after the successful retreat of the 'Ten Thousand,' deposited money there. See Falkener, *Ephesus and the Temple of Diana* (1862), pp. 313, 314.

² The Chytra (χύτρα) was a round earthenware pot, or pipkin, left in its natural rough state of red clay. (See Rich, *Companion to the Latin and Greek Lexicon*, p. 157, where an illustration is given.) In ceremonies of installation, women carried such vessels filled with boiled pulse.

CHREM. These pots are truly in a different case
 From pots in general ; for commonly
 The mother¹ floats upon the top of them,
 But here the mother is beneath the pots.

(Procession is formed)

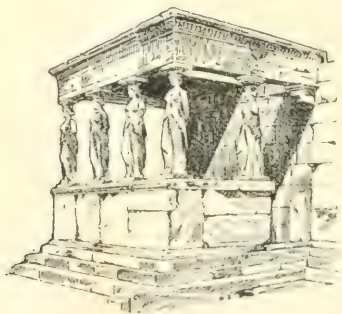
CHORUS. We must keep our place no longer, but, retiring now
 from here,

Join the line of the procession, singing anthems in the rear.

(The procession leaves the stage, the CHORUS following)

(End of Act V.)

¹ I am indebted to the kindness of one who was, like myself, a pupil of Mr. Richard Shilleto, for the suggestion, which came from that great scholar, of 'mother,' in its double sense of 'parent' and 'scum,' as an English equivalent of *γῆρας* in its double sense of 'old woman' and 'scum,' the play upon which constitutes the basis of the joke in the Greek. Cookesley compares with this the play on the words 'gravity' and 'gravy' in Shakespeare, *K. Henry IV.* Pt. II. Act i. Sc. 2.



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Aristophanes.
Plutus; tr. & ed. by Kennedy.
Plutus

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